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Southern Language, Ideology, and Identity in a High School Sorority

by

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I cannot possibly acknowledge everyone who has helped me through this long process, and I could certainly not do so adequately. Instead, I offer these few words of gratitude.

Abstract

This dissertation explores the language practices of high school sorority members in a mid-sized city in the U.S. South. Specifically, it describes how economically privileged, white, female youth in the Young Ladies' Society of Midway (YLSM) used Southern language to position themselves and others in relation to widely and locally circulating ideologies of language, region, gender, and class. Drawing on sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological methods, this study addresses the issues of how Southern language practices and language ideologies relate and how indexical meanings and social identities emerge through linguistic interaction.

As a study that examines the language of a group of Southern girls, this dissertation contributes to linguists' understanding of what Southern language is. I argue that Southern language is best understood not as a set of linguistic features used by people in the South but as an emergent construct that is informed by and serves various ideological purposes. First, by drawing on ethnographic insights and interactional analysis, I illustrate how YLSM members defined the language practices of working-class others as "accented" and "ignorant" compared with the "polite" and "charming" language practices of upper-class, or preppy, Southerners like themselves. In doing so, these speakers reproduced the widely circulating stigma of Southern language, specifically with respect to phonological forms, yet they also erased linguistic stigma for themselves by calling attention instead to the positive functions of preppy Southern language. Second, I show how Southern language practices were not merely indexical of

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regional identity but rather were indexical of social types defined along multiple

intersecting dimensions of identity. Specifically, when they invoked images of redneck

and preppy Southerners to describe their male friends, YLSM members constructed

Southern language forms as indexing region, gender, and class at once. Third, I use both

interactional and sociophonetic analyses to demonstrate how two speakers used glide-

weakened /ai/ and fronted /u/, often considered hallmarks of Southern language, to reflect

their different orientations to Southern identity. The regional indexical meanings of these

vowels emerged through their strategic use in interactions, for example, in stylized

moments, where their use reproduced both positive and negative types of Southern

identity and Southern speech. This dissertation illustrates the complexity of the social

meanings of language practices: social meanings are partially shaped by regionally and

widely circulating ideologies, yet they are also partially emergent within the course of

interactions themselves.

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Chapter 1.Introduction

> Sara: What do you think of when you think of like a stereotypical Southern person?
> Hailey: Ha, like a redneck, hillbilly…
> Diana: Pearls, plantation homes … "Hey yall" …
> Hailey: Yeah, it's either like hillbillies or like really classy.

Southerners often view Southern language and Southern identity in ways that diverge from the perspectives of linguists, a fact that emerged during my research with the Young Ladies' Society of Midway (YLSM),[1] a high school sorority in the Southern United States. As illustrated in the excerpt above, one important difference was that these sorority members rarely viewed Southern language and identity in regional terms alone; instead, they linked Southern language with stereotypes of class, gender, and race through dichotomizing descriptions of "rednecks" and "hillbillies" compared with pearl-wearing "classy" Southerners who live in "plantation homes" and say "hey yall."[2] In this dissertation, I describe how language ideologies and practices among YLSM members compared to academic understandings of Southern language and add a needed perspective to sociolinguistic investigations.

The language of the U.S. South has long been of interest to linguists, and scholars have typically taken two approaches to its study: first, describing the linguistic features used by speakers believed to represent this region, and, second, describing the

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[1] All personal and local place names have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the research participants.
[2] I choose to use the spelling "yall" from among its numerous variations, an orthographic choice that will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2 (page 12).

stereotypical—and sometimes stigmatizing—perceptions of these linguistic features. While these studies have laid an important theoretical foundation, they overlook crucial aspects of Southern language, namely, the ways in which Southerners' diverse and complex ideologies about their language use are tied to beliefs about class, gender, and race as well as the fact that Southern language is not a fixed linguistic object but a situated social construct that serves particular ideological goals.

This dissertation looks beyond the fixed social meanings of Southern language and examines its nuances from the perspective of a community of young, economically privileged, white female Southerners. As such, it answers Montgomery's (1997) call for research not only in terms of linguistic description but also on the ways that Southern language is used for the "identity and purposes" of its speakers (18). Speakers do not use Southern language simply because of geography; they do so because of their personal histories and orientations toward the region (Johnstone 2003) and because of the need to reconcile their identities as Southern not only alongside their classed, gendered, and racialized identities but also in light of the widely acknowledged social stigma of being and sounding like a Southerner. This study considers Southern language as a combination of linguistic forms and discursive stances that draw on and produce ideologies of Southern social types, as speakers position themselves and others in relation to these types.

Specifically, this dissertation investigates how Southern language was variously defined and used by YLSM members in the mid-sized city of Midway in the Southeastern United States. A sociolinguistic study of YLSM members answers important questions about what it meant to be and to speak like a Southerner within this particular

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demographic. In particular, this study attends to the classed and gendered dimensions of Southern language, given that participants never explicitly mentioned race when talking about the South. At the same time, this dissertation also recognizes this erasure as racializing processes, implicitly defining Southern language and identity as white despite a historical, demographic, and linguistic context of racial complexity. Drawing on sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological methods, this dissertation addresses how YLSM members constructed their linguistic identities as preppy Southern girls, claiming to use positively valued aspects of Southern language, such as politeness, while at the same time distancing themselves from negatively valued, and often stigmatized, aspects of Southern identity, particularly Southern accents.

In this dissertation, I argue that Southern language is best understood not only as a set of linguistic features used by people in the South but as an emergent construct that is informed by and serves various ideological purposes. The Southerners in my research talked about and used Southern language in ways that complicated widely circulating stereotypes of white Southern speakers, linking Southern language features with types of Southerners that were gendered and classed rather than with an isolated dimension of regional identity. In doing so, they aligned themselves with a positive type of Southern identity, constructed as feminine and economically privileged in part by the use of Southern language practices such as politeness and the avoidance of linguistic features that could be perceived as an accent. In addition, they deflected the popular prejudice against Southerners onto a distinct *other* type, defined as often masculine, rural, lower class, and heavily accented.

The contributions of this dissertation are three-fold. First, this dissertation shows how Southern language features have indexical meanings that are layered, multiple, and dependent on local context (Eckert 2008a; Silverstein 2003). Attending to social resources beyond Southern language use, this dissertation also explores the ways that language and other semiotic practices, such as wearing particular kinds of clothing and other acts of material consumption, can directly and indirectly index multiple layers of social meanings, such as stances, acts, and social categories (Ochs 1992). In particular, YLSM members often indexed social types that lay at the intersection of multiple social dimensions, such as place, gender, and class. These were associated with particular stances and acts, collectively indexing identities such as "preppy Southern girls" and "redneck Southern boys." Illustrating how Southern language can intersect with and index multiple social dimensions aligns this dissertation with recent studies (e.g., Johnstone 1999; Mallinson 2006) that attend to the social uses of Southern language and complicate its definitions as primarily distinguished by phonetic, morpho-syntactic, and lexical features.

Second, this study provides an account of the link between language ideologies and language practices within the South, for example, in response to widely and locally circulating stereotypes of Southern identity. As the most recognized regional language variety in the United States, the language of the South is often labeled both the "least correct" and the "friendliest" by Southerners and non-Southerners alike (Fridland & Bartlett 2006; Preston & Robinson 2008). Ideologies behind these disparate evaluations of Southern speech have rarely been explored (except see Lippi-Green 2012). However, both the use of Southern language features and ideologies about their use contribute to

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the social meaning and the social life of this regional variety. This dissertation views regional identity as an "emic," or locally defined, category (Johnstone 2004:66) and explores how Southern identity was socially and interactionally constructed relative to other identities. By focusing on members of a high school sorority, this study also adds to our understanding of locally defined language styles, particularly those of female youth (Bucholtz 1999a; Eckert 2000; Mendoza-Denton 2008), in the context of regional and institutional pressures on models of identity and behavior.

Third, by taking an interactional approach, this dissertation illuminates the complex and nuanced processes through which language is used to negotiate identities. Interactional research examines how social identities are collaboratively negotiated in conversation and how they emerge over time and across contexts. Specifically, this dissertation addresses how sorority members drew on Southern language resources and on metalinguistic commentary in interactions to position themselves and others in relation to local Southern models of personhood (cf. Agha 2007a) like "preppy girls" and "rednecks." By exploring Southern language practices and identity construction in conversations among YLSM members, this dissertation examines how economically privileged young women adopted—and sometimes avoided—certain linguistic resources in order to construct particular types of Southern identities.

1.1. Organization of the dissertation

The next two chapters of the dissertation outline the theoretical, ethnographic, and methodological background to the study. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the relevant literature on cultural and linguistic studies of the U.S. South, on the use of language to construct youth identities, and on the social meaning of linguistic variation. Chapter 3

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begins with a description of the field site, YLSM, situated within the South and within Midway specifically, and concludes by detailing the methods of data collection and analysis that provide the foundation for this dissertation.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present analyses of YLSM language practices. First, Chapter 4 explores YLSM members' ideologies of Southern language, specifically how these girls sometimes claimed to use language conveying "Southern politeness," yet at other times they distanced themselves from often-stigmatized "Southern accents." These shifting alignments mapped the friendliness and incorrectness of Southern language respectively onto its functions and forms. The analysis in Chapter 5 investigates another dichotomy of Southern identity, one relevant in the process of defining YLSM members' male peers as Southern. When they invoked images of redneck and preppy Southerners to describe their friends, YLSM members constructed Southern language forms not merely as indexing a regional variety but also as indicative of gender and class identities. Finally, Chapter 6 examines how two speakers used glide-weakened /ai/ and fronted /u/, often considered hallmarks of Southern language. Their different usages reflected the girls' own individual orientations to Southern identity, yet their similar strategic uses of these vowels, for example, in stylized moments, reproduced both positive and negative types of Southern identity and Southern speech.

The concluding chapter discusses the implications and limitations of this study and focuses on the underlying themes of the analyses in this dissertation. It elaborates on the interactions between Southern identity, language, and ideology among the YLSM community, specifically in terms of the dichotomy articulated by Hailey and Diana in the

opening of this chapter: Southern identity as "redneck" or "hillbilly" in contrast with "classy" or "preppy."

Chapter 2. Literature Review

As a sociolinguistic examination of youth in the Southern United States, this dissertation builds on studies in linguistics, anthropology, and cultural studies. The following chapter describes some of this literature, including studies of the U.S. South as a distinct regional culture as well as sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological studies of Southern dialects, youth language, and indexicality.

2.1. Southern language and culture

2.1.1. Cultural representations of the U.S. South

Many popular and academic discourses characterize the South as a culturally distinct, and often substandard, region, based on both racist and classist understandings of its history, population, culture, and language. At times, representations have conflated region and class in imagining the South as home to a rural and poor culture. Derived from assumptions of working-class inferiority, white Southerners in particular have been described as "savagely racist, intellectually stunted, [and] emotionally deranged," as described in W. J. Cash's (1941) book *The Mind of the South* (Cobb 2005:1). At other times, these representations have conflated region and race in depicting the South as overwhelmingly white (cf. Thompson & Sloan 2012); the most salient stereotypes of Southerners, ranging from the ignorant racist white redneck to the refined white Southern belle and the aristocratic white gentleman, continue to circulate in popular culture. In addition, the discourses of white Southerners have often conflated Southernness with

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whiteness, particularly by erasing racial diversity in favor of discussing Southern identity in connection to the land and Southern hospitality (Thompson & Sloan 2012).

While stereotypes of white Southerners may not all be pejorative, they nonetheless reproduce simplified models of the variety of people who live in the South (Reed 1986), and while these well-known types of Southerners encapsulate common perceptions of ways of life in the U.S. South, they leave little room for addressing the modern South. That is, these national representations of Southerners typically portray a South that is largely defined by its past and uninterested in participating in contemporary national culture. Like these perceptions of the culture of the South, the South is also cited as home to the most distinct and the most stigmatized regional language variety in the United States (Preston 1996).

Discussion about the South, particularly as it relates to and differs from its national setting, persists both popularly and academically. Numerous popular sources have addressed the topic of Southern culture, in the form of syndicated newspaper columns, like those of Lewis Grizzard for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and regional magazines, like *Southern Living*, that have reached national circulation. Academically, the study of the region has melded several separate disciplines, such as Southern history and Southern literature, into a more integrated study of Southern culture. Such integrated studies of the region's culture have been gaining traction since the late twentieth century, with milestones such as the publishing of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (1989) and the updated and expanded *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (2013).

With this sustained and growing interest in the South as a distinct region and culture, academic perceptions of the South have become more nuanced. Academics strive

to see beyond the "white Southern types" (Reed 1986) that highlight only those stereotypes that are nationally prominent and mute the experiences of other Southerners, including non-white, middle-class, and urban Southerners (for more discussion on Southern types, see Section 5.1). Recent research on Southern culture now incorporates numerous layers of diversity: racially, examining the experiences of Native Americans (Sider 1994), African Americans (Dill & Williams 1992; Eyerman 2001; Thompson & Sloan 2012) and immigrant populations (e.g., Giemza 2012; Smith & Furuseth 2006; Mohl 2003); regionally, exploring the differences between coastal and mountain cultures (e.g., Cobb 1992; Griffin 2004) and rural and urban cultures (e.g., Cooper & Knotts 2013; Hartshorn 1997; Miller & Pozzetta 1988; Hyland, Register & Gunther 1991); and classed, reflecting on experiences across the socioeconomic class spectrum (Bageant 2007; Hubbs 2011; Lewis 2012). Similarly, as discussed in the following section, linguistic studies of Southern language practices have moved beyond the speech of older and rural speakers, for a long time considered the ideal representatives of regional speech (cf. Bucholtz 2003), to address how language is used by various diverse populations across the South.

While the South persists as a distinct "imagined community" (cf. Anderson 1991) in our national consciousness, the heterogeneity of Southern people leads to a diverse collection of Southern experiences. Southern historian James Cobb (1999a) has viewed Southern culture as "an ongoing cycle of interaction between past and present," and the diversity within the region suggests a view of "the modernizing South's cultural identity as a work in progress rather than fashioning it into a final, finished product" (4). Influenced by the past and shaping the present, Southern youth relate to and rebel against

their regional identities in ways that ultimately influence how the South will be defined as a region and as a culture.

2.1.2. Linguistic descriptions of the U.S. South

Studies of language in the U.S. South, which I will call Southern American English (SAE) here,[3] typically derived from a dialectal approach that focused on linguistic features that were seen as specific to the region, yet often also specific to white speakers, for example lexical (e.g., Kurath 1949; Cassidy & Hall 1985), morpho-syntactic (e.g., Atwood 1953) and phonological (e.g., Kurath & McDavid 1961). *The Atlas of North American English* (Labov et al. 2006), a more recent study addresses phonological variation within the United States and Canada, providing an updated depiction of regional pronunciations. Such dialectology data also point out linguistic distinctions not only between smaller regions in the South, such as the borders of the South (Baranowski 2008a; Cramer 2013) and in relatively isolated communities of speakers in Appalachian areas (Wolfram & Christian 1976; Hazen, Butcher & King 2010) and on islands along the East coast (Nichols 1978; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2003), but also between Southern speakers of different races, for example elaborating on the linguistic similarities and differences of European American and African American speakers (Bailey 2001; Cukor-Avila 2003; Thomas 2004; Childs, Mallinson & Carpenter 2009). Many of the linguistic features specific to SAE are described, even by linguists, as deviations from a standard variety of American English, reproducing the standard/nonstandard distinction between

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[3] In this section, I will refer to Southern American English (SAE) as the language variety examined in various dialectal studies of the Southern United States. While I use this term in order to refer to a social construct that is in many ways real to those living inside and outside the South, I also recognize that this label is problematic in part because it collapses the heterogeneity of lived experiences across the South.

the region and its national context. The social meanings of linguistic features of the South

will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.1.

One of the particular linguistic areas of interest has been the set of lexical items

that distinguish SAE from other regional dialects in the United States. Comparing data

from the *Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States* (McDavid & O'Cain

1980), collected in the 1930s, to her own data collected in the 1990s, Johnson (1997)

revisits patterns of lexical distinctions across three geographical regions in North

Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia: the mountain, piedmont, and coastal regions. Her

analysis illustrates that the decline in lexical distinctions correlates with sociocultural

changes in those regions, including changes due to "transportation and educational

advances, industrialization, and […] militarization" (385). However, the urban-rural

distinction remains robust, despite a number of lexical items that became obsolete during

the twentieth century. Regardless of sociocultural changes in the American South, certain

lexical items still serve as markers of Southern identity; of particular relevance to this

dissertation are various regional address terms. Even with its spreading use outside of the

South (Tillery et al. 2000), the second person plural pronoun "yall" [4] is a persistent

feature of Southern speech. Likewise, the address terms "sir" and "ma'am" are also

emblematic of Southern identity. These terms have become codified in yes/no responses

(e.g., "yes, sir" and "yes, ma'am") and are a salient marker of politeness in the South,

often associated with the marking of relative statuses of age and respect between

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[4] I choose to use the spelling "yall" from among its numerous variations ("you-all," "y'all," "ya'll," "yawl") in part because of its status as a single morpheme in the South and in part because orthographic representation aligns with other scholars, including Tillery and Bailey (1998), Tillery et al. (2000), and Bernstein (2003), who have written extensively on the use of "yall" and the history of scholarship surrounding it.

addressor and addressee (e.g. Simpkins 1969; Wolfson & Manes 1980; Ching 1988; Davies 1997; Johnson 2008).

SAE has also been characterized as having distinctive morpho-syntactic elements. For example, SAE speakers have been widely noted as using double or multiple modals such as "might could," which convey nuances in aspect and modality that may not be grammatically encoded in other dialects of American English (Mishoe & Montgomery 1994), and using the quasi-modal "fixing to," has been recently explored (Bernstein 2003; Myers 2014). Some morpho-syntactic features, such as leveled auxiliary negation and variable copula absence (Weldon 1994; 2003), are more characteristic of African American English, historically rooted in the South, and more specifically the language variety Gullah, spoken by African Americans on the coastal islands of South Carolina and Georgia. In addition, use of "done" as a preverbal auxiliary indicating a perfective, or completive, aspectual feature of the verb (Atwood 1953; Feagin 1979) is one of the many features that has been shown to characterize the language of Southern whites and African Americans (Schneider 1983). In popular discourses both inside and outside the South, these morpho-syntactic elements are often cited as salient markers of "bad grammar" and Southern "incorrectness" (Preston 1996).

Additionally, at a discourse level, certain ways of speaking, such as storytelling and interacting, characterize the speech of both African Americans and whites within the South. With respect to specific speech events, studies have identified salient elements of Southern storytelling practices (e.g., Davies 2008) as well as Southern humor (Davies 2006; 2010). The discourse structure and social uses of SAE remain an understudied area, an issue articulated by Montgomery (1997), who posed questions for needed research on

the linguistic definitions of "Southern politeness" and the uses of "a Southern style" (19). In some previous literature, the use of particular Southern styles—drawing on Southern linguistic features—may be associated with specific models of Southern identity; as Johnstone (1999; 2003) explores, women in Texas may adopt Southern styles associated with the "Southern belle" to their own aims, "claiming that [this style] is particularly useful as part of a sexually charged manipulative strategy" (2003:204).

Finally, the "Southern accent" is widely recognized in popular and academic discourses, referring at once to multiple phonological characteristics, such as the Southern "drawl" (see below) and the Southern vowel system (Wolfram 2003; Fridland 2012) that reflects the Southern Vowel Shift (Labov 1994; Labov & Ash 1997). Among the most recognized vowel features of SAE is the pronunciation of the /ai/ diphthong as more like a monophthong, so that a word like "bye" may be pronounced like "bah." This feature has been attested since the beginning of the twentieth century (Bailey & Tillery 1996:313) and has been called the "confederate vowel" because of its strong connection with the South (Sledd 1966:21). It has also been the particular subject of study by Fridland (1999; 2001), whose work has examined its spread among speakers in Memphis, Tennessee.

Additionally, the fronting of the back vowels /u/ and /o/ is another characteristic of Southern phonology, with words like "boot" and "boat" sounding respectively more like the words "bit" and "bet." This fronting has been described and studied as part of the Southern Vowel Shift (Fridland 2001; Labov 1994; Thomas 2003), and this Southern usage has been understood as historically distinct from similar fronting processes used to index a range of other social meanings, such as gender (Eckert 2006), ethnicity (Fought

1999; Hall-Lew 2010), and sexuality (Podesva 2011). The Southern Vowel Shift has been investigated in Southern urban settings, including Memphis, Tennessee (Fridland 1999; Fridland 2001), Houston, Texas (Thomas 2003), and Raleigh, North Carolina (Dodsworth & Kohn 2012), with particular attention in Raleigh to the decline of the SVS among younger generations and white-collar professionals (Dodsworth 2013). (The status of the vowels /ai/ and /u/ as Southern features will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 6.)

Another feature of Southern vowel pronunciation is the "pin-pen merger," or the merging of the front vowels /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ before nasals, so that "pin" and "pen," which are distinct in many non-Southern varieties of American English, are both realized as "pin" with the /ɪ/ vowel. This feature has been a documented component of SAE since the nineteenth century (Kurath & McDavid 1961; Brown 1991), although there is some evidence that this merger is becoming less common in the urban South (Tillery & Bailey 2004; Koops, Gentry & Pantos 2008). A range of other phonological features have been identified, such as the switching of front tense and lax vowels, such that the words "beat" and "bait" would sound like "bit" and "bet" and vise versa (/bit/ ~ /bɪt/, and (/bet/ ~ /bɛt/) (Labov 1994; Kendall & Fridland 2012), the merger of front vowels before /l/ such that "hill" and "heel" both sound like "hill" (/hɪl/) and "fail" and "fell" both sound like "fell" (/fɛl/) (Bailey et al. 1991). Finally, the "Southern drawl," or vowel breaking, describes the pronunciation of certain standard monophthongal vowels as diphthongs, for example pronouncing "bed" with two syllables more like "bay-ed" (/beˌəd/) (Feagin 1987; Allbritten 2011).

2.1.3. Southern language as an ideological construct

These dialect descriptions have crucially identified the most salient and systematic elements of Southern language, including those that vary across speakers and communities. Yet non-Southerners often still imagine the South to be a homogenous region, both linguistically and socially (Lippi-Green 2012), defined primarily in opposition to other areas in the U.S. Such ideas are informed by language ideologies, which are, in a broad sense, culturally shared "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (Kroskrity 2004:498), and which act as "a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk" (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994:55). In addition, language ideologies also represent the interests of particular cultural groups and are used to define various cultural identities (Kroskrity 2004; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994), for example, in the context of social stigma (Black 2013). Based on a broadly circulating, hegemonic language ideology in the United States according to which all varieties other than the "standard" are inferior (Lippi-Green 2012), the language of the South remains undoubtedly stigmatized.

Ideologies shape the views of both public and academic audiences. For example, critiques of homogenized characterizations of Southern speakers address both methodological and ideological assumptions of early linguistic studies of Southern American English. One such critique addressed the dialectology methods that have focused on older, lifelong residents of rural areas as the most "authentic" speakers of a region (Bucholtz 2003) and that therefore obscure the language practices of other populations, for example in younger, migrating, and urban and suburban communities. In similar moves to study the language practices of a wider variety of speakers, researchers are moving away from viewing male, urban, working-class African American

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populations as the "authentic" speakers of African American English, for example, viewing the language variety itself as diverse rather than monolithic and examining middle-class African American women and men as speakers of this language variety (Weldon 2011). Just as academic views on the authentic speakers of racially defined language varieties have been critiqued as overly simplistic, ideologies of regional identities have also often relied only on geographic location to define place identities, rather than viewing place affiliation as a social construct (cf. Johnstone 2004; Modan 2007; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Carmichael 2014).

In various Southern contexts, researchers have addressed the ways that speakers employ specific linguistic practices to construct regional identities as well as ethnic and gender identities for particular social purposes within local communities (Schilling-Estes 1998; Schilling-Estes 2004; Johnstone 1999; Mallinson 2006; Burkette 2013). Schilling-Estes (1998) and Johnstone (1999) both examine regional identity construction based on the relationship between stylistic performances of identity and speakers' metalinguistic commentary representing some degree of awareness of their own linguistic practices. Metalinguistic commentary, while not often a component of sociolinguistic research (cf. Nylund 2013), presents a valid opportunity to examine speakers' explicit language ideologies as well as their own linguistic practices.

Understanding the persistent use of features of SAE and widely held attitudes toward their use depends on a cultural examination of the role of this regional language variety in both national and local contexts. Research in perceptual dialectology has shown that SAE is at once the most recognized and the most stigmatized regional language variety in the United States (Preston 1996). However, in addition to being

labeled the "least correct" dialect region by non-Southerners and Southerners alike, the South is often ranked highly on the "friendliness" scale (Fridland & Bartlett 2006; Preston & Robinson 2008). As one example, Cramer (2013) explores more nuanced distinctions in terms of linguistic perceptions and Southern stereotypes locally within the state of Kentucky. Studies of the social implications of linguistic perception, also known as "folk linguistics" and "folk dialectology" (Niedzielski & Preston 2003; Preston 2004), seek to uncover similar kinds of underlying attitudes toward language variation and social categories as do studies of language ideology. As I discuss in Section 2.3, the social meanings of Southern linguistic features are complex and dependent on their use in interaction.

Despite the fact that the U.S. South is a linguistically distinct and diverse region, few studies address the interaction between language ideology and practice in the region (although see Bender 2004). Importantly, ideologies about the multivalent evaluations of Southern speech and speakers have been explored by researchers like Lippi-Green (2012), who examines how national and intraregional ideologies about Southern identity and Southern language reproduce linguistic prejudice. The prominence of nationally recognized stereotypes of Southern speakers calls attention to the need for research on the ways that language is used in the reproduction and contestation of such stereotypes of regional identity, particularly in the context of changing linguistic practices, such as those in the urban South, where regional language practices may no longer be used in the same ways (Tillery & Bailey 2004; Dodsworth & Kohn 2012).

2.2. Youth subcultures and language

Adolescent language has been of interest to sociolinguists working under two broad paradigms. Under the first, age is a social variable that allows age-graded studies of language changes in progress. Attention to younger speakers arose because of the belief that this life stage includes the "development of the social use of the vernacular" (Eckert 1997:163). According to Eckert (1997), variationist approaches to language change attend to adolescents because of the assumption that adolescent speakers are actively "constructing [their] identities in opposition to – or at least independently of – their elders" (163), allowing for a comparative analysis across age groups. Such variationist perspectives follow approaches from psychological and sociological studies that focus on adolescence as a transitional period, which is characterized by the struggle to navigate the liminal space between childhood and adulthood. Thus, while contributing valuable perspectives on language changes over time or in progress, these studies view adolescence as a period of life defined by transition, by incomplete identities, in between the stages of child and adult.

The second paradigm assumes that adolescence and adolescent language practices are objects of study in their own right. In Bucholtz's (2002) review of studies of "youth culture," a term that "foregrounds age not as trajectory, but as identity" (532), she argues that the use of ethnographic methods can highlight the ways that "youth negotiate cultural identities in a variety of contexts, both material and semiotic, both leisure-based and at home, school, work, and in the political sphere" (2002:544). Studies of youth cultures and linguistic practices have been common in Europe and in the UK in particular in reference to multilingualism, immigration, and school life (Jaspers 2006; Moore 2006; Snell 2013; Rampton 1995; Rampton 1999). A range of studies have called attention to

the important role that language practices of young people play in cultural processes, such as in interpreting for parents in immigrant communities (Reynolds & Orellana 2009), socializing one another into local ideologies of respect (Reynolds 2008), and building close relations between first- and second-generation immigrant youth (Chun 2009).

Many studies of youth cultures attend in particular to the styles that youth perform through language, for example investigating how individuals interact within their own subcultures by attending to their engagement in school, occupations, and racial politics (Hebdige 1979; Willis 1977). Significantly, Hebdige (1979) examined youth cultural practices from a stylistic perspective, illustrating how style incorporates many types of semiotic displays, such as material possession, clothing, music, political orientation, as well as linguistic practices. Ethnographic methods allow for attention to the ways that linguistic variables fit into general styles of being which have the potential to reference social personas as well as the more specific social meanings that characterize those personas or models of identity.

By examining language practices within a style framework and within small-scale social networks, ethnographic linguistic studies are able to examine the ways that one type of identity, such as regional identity, intersects and interacts with others, including race, age, and gender. For example, Eckert's (2000) study in a Detroit-area high school revealed the ways that different groups of students adopted a regional vowel shift, the Northern Cities Shift, which correlated with both the gender of speakers as well as their attitudes toward their school and city. Similarly, Wagner (2013) finds that youth in Philadelphia differentiate themselves according to ethnicity by drawing on various

regional vowel shifts, such as Canadian raising. Thus, studies of youth populations are able to incorporate the intersection of other social dimensions, including stances, attitudes, ideologies, and demographic factors such as gender, social class, and ethnicity.

Gender is a salient dimension of youth cultural practices. Studies of female adolescents have attended to societal influences on gendered structures of social organization and interaction. For example, cultural analyses of female youth often examine issues of body image and sexuality, highlighting the role of the media in cultural standards of femininity and beauty (Nichter 2000; Parker et al. 1995) and on culturally deviant behavior such as teenage pregnancy (Burbank & Chisholm 1998; Luker 1996). Likewise, notions of popularity and meanness have been investigated in multiple academic disciplines, highlighting the popularly circulated trope of "mean girls" in middle and high schools, for example, including Gonick (2004) and Ringrose's (2006) developmental psychological perspectives on the influence of popular media on this model of youth femininity, and including Merten's (1997; 1999; 2004) sociological analyses of peer relationships among middle-school girls. Studies such as these have informed popular conceptions of girlhood as it is widely circulated in American media.

Additionally, several linguistic studies have ethnographically explored the ways that girls interact with each other at school in gendered subcultures (e.g. Bucholtz 1999a; Eckert 2011), for example, specifically citing play activities as spaces in which social and identity work is accomplished, through strategies such as cooperation or competition (e.g. Goodwin 2006; Hughes 1988). Ethnographic studies of female speakers have highlighted identity construction relative to the conflicting pressures of different types of institutional ties, such as those to high schools, cliques, and gangs (e.g., Eckert 2000; Goodwin 2006;

Mendoza-Denton 2008; Wortham 2008). Previous studies have illustrated how linguistic interactions can signal interpersonal relationships as well as relationships to social institutions, such as in collegiate fraternities and sororities (Kiesling 1997; 2001; McLemore 1991). The role of collegiate Greek-letter organizations on student life, individual development, and social movements has been of interest in a number of fields including the interactions between Greek life and race, gender, and class identities (cf. DeSantis 2007; Torbenson & Parks 2009; Brown, Parks & Phillips 2012). Sociolinguistic studies of fraternity and sorority members address the ways individuals in transition from adolescence to adulthood negotiate power relations linguistically within these organizations (Kiesling 1996; 1998; O'Malley 2012).

Addressing social dimensions beyond gender, Bettie (2003) illustrates that girls attend to social distinctions such as race and economic class in addition to gender. Bettie argues that because "girls do not define themselves only in relationship to boys in a heterosexual matrix" (5), studies of youth cultures, and of female cultures in particular, should expand their scope of relevant social practices. Her stance represents a marked departure from the traditionally male-dominated framework for cultural studies, influenced by Willis (1977) and Hebdige (1979) for example, whose research centered only on male subcultures, particularly working-class ones. Accordingly, many recent linguistic ethnographies explore identity practices beyond gender identities among groups of adolescent speakers. In particular, studies have focused on the linguistic and social practices that define adolescents' perception and construction of racial identities as well as identities which are situated at the intersection of multiple social dimensions such as gender, race, social class, and academic engagement (e.g., Bucholtz 1999b; 2011; Chun

2007; 2011; Eckert 1988; 2000; Goodwin 2006; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Wortham 2005).

These approaches attend to how youth negotiate identities by constructing styles that

combine multiple semiotic resources; language is only one component of youth identity

and style, as described in the following section.

2.3. An indexical approach to language and identity

Indexical approaches to language and identity diverge from a longstanding

sociolinguistic paradigm that has studied language variation primarily in order to

understand language change. While studies of language variation and change (Labov

1966; 1972a) have provided important tools for examining patterned linguistic variation

across social dimensions, such as age, race, sex, and socioeconomic class, studies that

focus on indexical processes, and the social meanings and identities that emerge from

these processes, have reconceptualized the links between speakers' language use and

their identities. In particular, an indexical approach takes a social constructionist

perspective towards identity, recognizing the agency that speakers may have as well as

the dynamic nature of the processes of social identification.

Indeed, the view that speakers are agentive in their language practices is not

unique to an indexical approach. For example, Milroy's (1980) study of language

variation in Belfast recognized that speakers may choose to use particular vernacular or

standard features in order to construct varying degrees of affiliation with a local

community. Additionally, studies that moved beyond an understanding of stylistic

variation as determined by attention paid to speech (e.g. according to Labov 1972a) have

addressed the dynamic nature of language variation and identity. For example, Bell's

(1984) theory of audience design considered how speakers shape their language for both

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imagined and real audiences. Similarly, Rickford and McNair-Knox's (1994) analysis of a single speaker's linguistic variation demonstrated how linguistic practices correlate with the racial identity of the audience—that is, the interviewer—as well as with interview topics.

However, an indexical approach especially foregrounds the socially constructed nature of identities; identities are not internal and essential facts about people but cultural constructs that are enacted and performed (Butler 1990). Johnstone (2004:66) argues that even regional identities ought to be considered from this perspective by attending to the different ways that speakers may align with the same place, following approaches to socially constructed ethnic (e.g., Eckert 2008b; Fought 2006; Schilling-Estes 2004) and gender identities (e.g., Cameron 1997; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). Under this social constructionist view, sometimes labeled the "third wave" of variationist sociolinguistic research (Eckert 2012) in contrast to two earlier "waves," researchers elaborate on the role of speakers as both responding to and creating social contexts, identities, and meanings through their language practices (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Bucholtz 2011).

Importantly, the linguistic resources and indexical links that are used to construct social identities are both multiple and complex. The simultaneous use and combination of multiple linguistic and social resources to construct specific kinds of social personas has been understood in terms of "styles" (California Style Collective 1993; Eckert 2008a). These multiple resources are blended through a process of "bricolage" (Lévi-Strauss 1966) as described in Hebdige's (1979) sociological study of youth subcultures. Stylistic studies of language variation thus identify sets of linguistic features that index multiple

aspects of identities and that coalesce into a coherent set of social meanings (e.g., Eckert 2008a; Moore & Podesva 2009; Zhang 2005). Eckert (2008a) argues that speakers enact linguistic styles relative to other semiotic resources and in response to ideologies of relevant social meanings and models of social identity. Bucholtz (1999a:211–212) has argued that identities can be performed using linguistic styles through both positive and negative identity practices, illustrating that speakers use language to construct their identities in a particular way (positive) and in order to distance themselves from other social identities (negative).

Not only do multiple linguistic and social resources together index social identities, but a single resource can index social meanings at multiple levels; for example, linguistic features may index social category membership or orientation (e.g., being (like) a teenager) and associated stances (e.g., being judgmental) and acts (e.g., critiquing). Highlighting the multiple levels of indexical meaning, Ochs (1992) argues that language can index an identity category such as gender indirectly; that is, "the relation of language to gender is constituted and mediated by the relation of language to stances, social activities, and other social constructs" (237). Silverstein's (2003) discussion of indexical orders similarly accounts for how linguistic variables may take on different but related social meanings given the way linguistic features are contextualized in a stylistic practice, community, or setting. Under his model of indexical orders (n^{th} and $n+1^{th}$), a first order indexical meaning attributed to a linguistic variable may correlate with a macro-scale social meaning, such as membership in a particular demographic category or association with a particular place, while a second order indexical meaning is associated with a particular type of speaker within a given demographic category. These different layers of

indexical meaning are partially dependent on speakers' levels of awareness of linguistic variation, and they allow for changes in the social meanings of a single linguistic feature across time and context.

In a similar account of complex and related indexical meanings, Eckert (2008a) proposes that speakers understand the meaning of linguistic variables in terms of an "indexical field," highlighting "that the meanings of variables are not precise or fixed but rather constitute a field of potential meanings" (454). Combining research from a number of sociolinguistic studies of the same linguistic feature, such as hyperarticulated /t/ release, she illustrates how this linguistic feature carries a number of potential, related meanings, including personal qualities like "educated" and "articulate," stances like "formal" and "careful," and the social types, or personas, which combine these other meanings, such as the "nerd girl" (Bucholtz 2001), "school teacher" (Benor 2001), or "prissy diva" (Podesva 2007) persona. Such persona styles (Eckert 2008a:456) can index social meanings indirectly by evoking these locally salient models of identity.

Yet linguistic features themselves do not inherently contain social meaning, but meaning emerges through their use: a linguistic feature "alone has no 'meaning' as such; 'meaning' comes about only when an identity takes shape through the tension between text and context and the negotiation between speaker and hearer" (Kiesling 1998:94). Such social meanings are inherently indeterminate, and this indeterminacy allows for the complex process through which linguistic signs may take on different and multiple meanings (Jaffe 2009a). The indeterminacy of the social values of linguistic features makes way for potential ambiguity of indexical meaning. As Woolard (1998) explains, in her examination of radio performances, ambiguity may arise from a linguistic feature's

bivalency: the **"**simultaneous membership of an element in more than one linguistic system" (6). Bucholtz (2004) argues that such ambiguous social meanings may also be exploited by speakers in less performed contexts, such as the construction of a linguistic style.

Additionally, the indexical approach I take recognizes that linguistic resources and styles may index numerous social dimensions simultaneously. I draw on Agha's (2005) notion of "figures of personhood" that can lie at the intersection of multiple social dimensions and that have become historically linked to linguistic registers through the process of enregisterment. A range of studies have similarly recognized that social dimensions of identity can intersect in complex ways in such imagined figures. For example, reflecting various indexical meanings of African American English, studies of language crossing (Rampton 1995) illustrate that the use of African American English by non-African Americans depends on stereotypes of young, black masculinity (Bucholtz 1999c; Chun 2001; Cutler 2003). Additionally, positive orientations to hip hop and African American English can index working-class black masculinity in Brazil (Roth-Gordon 2008), and interpretive acts of labeling other speakers as "talking black" and "talking white" among youth in Texas are often judgments of stereotypically gendered and racialized models of personhood (Chun 2011).

One of the ways in which linguistic styles can be exploited to draw attention to linguistic differences as well as corresponding social differences is through the use of stylization. According to Coupland (2001), "single utterances can be stylized when speakers are being studiedly 'artificial' or 'putting on a voice'" (346). Individuals adopt and perform the voices of others for a variety of reasons, including to mock others for

humorous effect (Mesthrie 2002; Chun 2004; Labrador 2004), and Goffman's (1981) notion of "footing" provides a way to view the various potential relationships between speakers and their stylized speech. Moments of linguistic imitation provide an opportunity to examine speakers' ideologies about linguistic forms and the people who use them.

Understanding the ways that linguistic features are used to index social meanings requires ethnographic research methods that attend to both widely circulating categories of meaning (e.g., black, white, middle-class, working-class, Southern, Northern) as well as the locally relevant identities with which speakers align through their language (e.g., jocks, burnouts, preps, nerds). Many sociolinguistic researchers have sought such an "emic" perspective, that is, a perspective that relies on insider knowledge of relevant linguistic and social variation, within the communities they study. For example, Milroy (1980) used ethnographic methods to determine the social meaning of language variation in Belfast, finding that language variation correlated not just with macro-level identities, but with degree of integration in the local working-class community. Linguistic studies that adopted and adapted Milroy's research methods, and her social network framework, similarly emphasized the local social meanings within a speech community that qualitatively emerge as part of the research process (e.g., Cheshire 1982; Rickford 1986; Edwards 1992).

Ethnographic research methods are also needed to understand the contexts of linguistic and social styles (Rampton 2010). For example, studies of stylistic practices have shown that styles and social meanings may be defined by linguistic features which co-occur with other semiotic practices such as the cut and color of denim worn by high

school students (Eckert 2000; Eckert 2008a) or the length of eyeliner worn by Latina gang members (Mendoza-Denton 2008). Ethnographic perspectives are therefore valuable for examining how indexical meanings are situated in local cultural contexts.

Just as ethnographic research can reveal insights regarding how speakers relate language variation and meaning, interactional methods can also call attention to the ways that meanings emerge from linguistic practices in use. (I further discuss the importance of situating both social identities and linguistic practices in local interactions in Section 5.2.) Recent interactional sociolinguistic approaches (Bucholtz & Hall 2005) recognize that indexical meanings are dynamic across speakers and situations given that social identities are constructed "as socially real through discourse, and especially interaction" (591). Moreover, the social meaning of linguistic variation is emergent not only in conversation but also across different speech events and contexts where it may be negotiated by multiple speakers (e.g., Wortham 2008). Current examinations of stancetaking (Du Bois 2007; Englebretson 2007; Jaffe 2009b) point to "stance" as a basic unit of social meaning that contribute to such emergent social identities; they argue that stances are presented by speakers to incrementally build recognizable categories of social meaning. Bucholtz and Hall's (2004) "relationality principle" and the "tactics of intersubjectivity" suggest a framework allowing research to attend to the processes by which multiple participants construct identities relative to others in interactions, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy. Understanding the complex and multiple indexical relationships between linguistic features and social identities depends on close analysis of stylistic practices and linguistic interactions through ethnographic

research methods. In the next chapter, I describe my own data collection and methods of

analysis aimed at a close cultural examination of linguistic practices and ideologies.

Chapter 3. Field Site and Methods

A study of the Young Ladies' Society of Midway offers a perspective on Southern identity that has often been overlooked. This community might not be considered an authentic community of Southern speakers according to some regional language studies, particularly those that viewed older, rural, male speakers as the most accurate representations of regional language practices. However, while neither older, rural, or male, most YLSM members saw themselves as Southern, even if they may not have viewed their language practices as the most salient marker of their regional identities. In this chapter, I aim to contextualize this study by describing how the YSLM community was culturally situated and by addressing my methods of data collection and analysis.

First, I discuss the particular history and culture of YLSM as a long-standing social club in its urban setting in the Southern city of Midway.[5] I introduce the specific participants of this dissertation research: members of a high school sorority, YLSM, in Midway. I then provide additional information about the particular subset of Midway

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[5] In order to maintain the anonymity of this field site while still sufficiently contextualizing my analysis with relevant sociocultural facts, some of the details of the history, social characteristics, and demographic information of Midway, a pseudonym, have been intentionally left vague. For example, I present the population as rounded estimates rather than specific figures, and I locate Midway simply in the American South rather than naming the specific state in which it is located. Omitting such details may appear to generalize about Southern language practices problematically, but I believe that these omissions are not likely to significantly affect my analyses; Southern states share particular historical and social cultural circumstances that shape the significance of the discourse analyzed in this dissertation.

residents who were selected as members of YLSM, not only defined as Southern female youth, but as a particular subgroup within the local social fabric. As discussed in the following chapters, YLSM members highlighted various aspects of identity—region, gender, and socioeconomic class—through their use of and ideologies about various linguistic practices. The topics covered in this chapter will set the stage for the analyses that follow and will be expanded upon in later chapters as they become relevant.

Second, this chapter also explains my research methods, including my interactional approach to studying the speech of YLSM members. These sections discuss the types of data collected, including various audio recordings, and provide an overview of the types of linguistic data and analyses, both of content and of linguistic form, that will be presented in the next few chapters.

3.1. The field site: The Young Ladies' Society of Midway

3.1.1. Midway: A city in the urban South

In the mid-twentieth century, numerous social clubs for junior high and high school students arose in cities across the United States, including in the Southeastern city of Midway.[6] Among these was the Young Ladies' Society of Midway, established in the late 1940s as a social organization for female students at a central public school. Numerous other social clubs sprang up in Midway schools, primarily clubs for white adolescents, although only a few were still in existence during my fieldwork, including

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[6] Around the time YLSM was founded, according to the 1950 United States Census, Midway was designated as a "city" with a population of over 70,000 and its surrounding area designated as a "standard metropolitan area" (U.S. Census Bureau; Office of Management and Budget 2010). Midway still carries the same classifications with an estimated city population of over 120,000 in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a).

MDC,[7] a sorority that was often seen as competition for YLSM, and a loosely-organized fraternity called the Gents. In the sixty years since its founding, YLSM had grown with the city of Midway, expanding its reach from students at Davis High School, restricted to white students only until the 1960s, to students at one additional public school and three private high schools in Midway; meanwhile, MDC continued to draw its membership solely from Davis High School.

Midway represents a mixture of both the past and the present South in many ways. Like other mid-sized Southern cities, its population and surrounding metropolitan area has grown as a result of migration from within the South as well from outside the region (Kromm 2012). It experienced some of the industrial growth and urbanization characteristic of Southern cities in the latter half of the twentieth century, but it has remained a mid-sized city with its population in 2010 around 120,000, significantly lower than large Southern cities like Nashville, Tennessee (601,222), Atlanta, Georgia (420,003), and Raleigh, North Carolina (403,892) (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a). While Midway does not have the same degree of industry and migration from outside of the South as do cities like Nashville, Atlanta, and Raleigh, it is nevertheless an urban center as the home of regional cultural attractions, including museums and a zoo, and institutions of higher learning. Like many cities in the twenty-first century, Midway has tried to encourage new industry and growth and has sought ways to reinvent itself in a national and global context, for example, lobbying to become the home of large corporate headquarters and professional sports teams.

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[7] I use the pseudonyms "MDC" and "the Gents" in order to protect the anonymity of these groups and their members.

At the same time, some aspects of Midway's cultural past have been well preserved. Midway's population had maintained a Southern majority, with over 50 percent of Midway residents born within the state and over 75 percent of Midway residents born within the South (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). Because so many Midway residents have family roots within the South, certain characteristics of the past South seemed to persist, such as Southern Baptist religious dominance and political conservatism as well as racial and socioeconomic divisions, geographically and socially. In addition, Midway and its residents have promoted a strong connection with the past through local and regional traditions highlighting the area's cultural history, such as festivals that celebrate Native American cultures, historical reenactments, and agricultural products.

3.1.2. YLSM: A cultural history

As an organization established in the mid-twentieth century, during the height of popularity of similar social clubs, YLSM was linked to a long history both generally in the United States and locally in Midway. Such social organizations, like high school fraternities, sororities, and civic organizations like the YMCA-sponsored Hi-Y club, offered an opportunity for extracurricular socialization and became common activities for high school students across the country (Graebner 1987). Graebner (1987) provides a detailed history of the pervasiveness of high school fraternities and sororities in the twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the public charge to curtail the influence of such "secret societies" as a result of their ability to divide the social landscape by race, ethnicity, economic class, and more local distinctions such as popularity in school.

The prevalence of high school social clubs brought attention to both the merits of additional socialization and the detrimental effects of the exclusionism that characterized many of these organizations. Social clubs reached levels of national popular awareness evidenced by a cover story in *Life* (1945) on a young women's organization and an exposé on "secret societies" in *Time* (1949), a piece which focused on hazing and other illicit social behaviors characteristic of male clubs. In general, young women's clubs received more favorable press than young men's clubs, including a regular column in the lifestyle magazine, *Ladies' Home Journal*, that had begun in late 1920s, featuring content celebrating these young women as mature, responsible, and glamorous (Forman-Brunell 2001).

YLSM was one of only two organizations in Midway to have survived since the mid-twentieth century: both high school sororities, YLSM and MDC. Thus, YLSM, in its current status during my fieldwork, offered a way for contemporary young women to connect with the traditions of an earlier time, particularly in Midway and in the South. Additionally, in interviews conducted in 2011, YLSM members alluded to a single high school fraternity, the Gents, which had existed in name only for a few years but was, by then, all but defunct. Just as in the mid-twentieth century, the local community held conflicting attitudes towards high school sororities, with some parents celebrating their virtues, while others, including school administrators, condemned them as the cause of the divisiveness and cliques that prevailed at their schools. YLSM in general maintained a positive reputation among the local community, having included among its membership the daughters of school administrators and teachers as well as church leaders. Unlike YLSM, MDC had for decades been plagued by rumors of hazing, unchaperoned parties,

and underage drinking, and was therefore officially banned from the school from which it drew its members.[8] In order to avoid the stigma attributed to MDC, YLSM strove to minimize its associations with MDC, citing the strong moral character of its members and its own institution's regulations that prohibited hazing and required parental supervision at YLSM functions.

Another way YLSM was connected to the past social fabric of Midway was through its legacy system. Like many collegiate Greek organizations, family connections to YLSM were an important factor in determining membership. The regulations for determining new members, by invitation only, included guidelines on privileging legacy members, that is, girls whose sisters, mothers, or grandmothers had also been members of YLSM. While a sibling connection was the most common, there were numerous members during the period of my fieldwork who were the daughters and granddaughters of former YLSM members. For example, the adult advisor of YLSM, Ms. Jones, was a member of YLSM in the 1960s, and her daughter had been a member as well. Likewise, one of the recent presidents of YLSM was the granddaughter of a founding member of the organization in the 1940s. While membership practices privileged legacies over other girls, invitations were certainly not restricted to legacies. Figure 3.1 illustrates how often membership invitations had been extended to legacies and non-legacies over the six contiguous semesters of my fieldwork.[9] Over these six semesters (Fall 2010 to Spring

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[8] The practice of banning social organizations like sororities and fraternities from high schools has a long history, and a number of high school student handbooks include policies that explicitly prohibit student participation. Because of official restrictions on these clubs, their social exclusiveness, and their secretive natures, more such organizations may have existed than I was aware of at the time of my research.

[9] The difference between the number of legacies invited to join YLSM in the Fall and Spring semesters is a result of sorority membership policies. These dictate that ninth

2013), 58 out of 188 invited members were legacies, at a proportion of 30 percent. This

mirrors the general makeup of YLSM membership: of the 170 active members in YLSM

in the Spring of 2013, 52 of these were legacies, again representing 30 percent of the total

membership. Thus, YLSM's associations with established families in the city, and the

region by extension, were continually supported through membership practices that

privileged long-standing local families over newer families in the area, emphasizing the

importance of both family and regional identity.
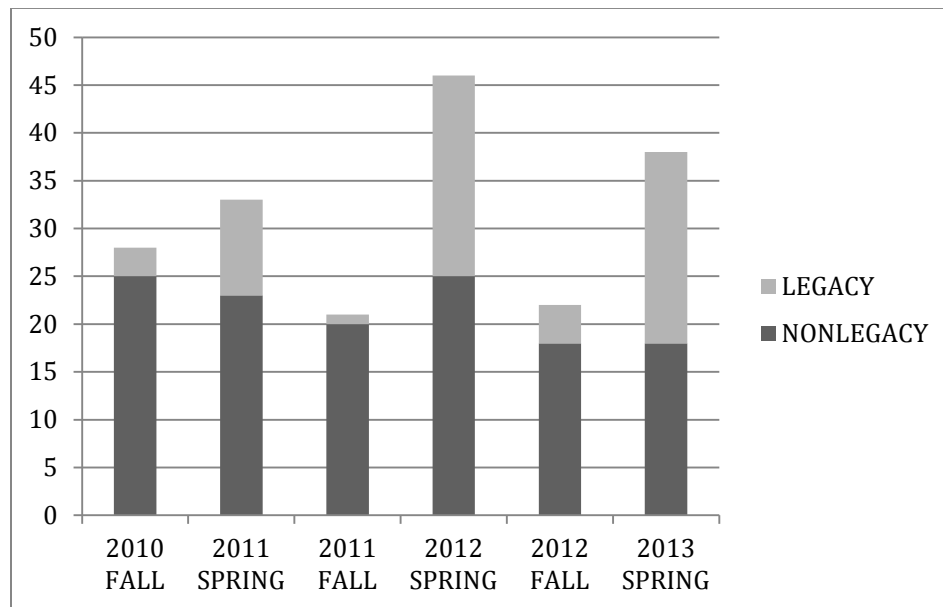
Figure 3.1. Legacy and non-legacy membership invitations

In its literature as well as in unofficial discourses, YLSM described itself as a

philanthropic institution, encouraging its members to volunteer and donate money and

goods to local causes; however, the social networking aspects of YLSM were the primary

graders are invited to join during the Spring semesters and "upperclassmen" are invited
during the Fall semesters. Legacies are invited to join YLSM as early as possible, i.e., as
ninth graders, leading to the higher proportion of legacy invitations each spring.

draw for its members. YLSM provided an opportunity for high school girls to meet socially outside of school and hosted social events for other high school students in the area. Additionally, participation in YLSM, as a high school sorority, was framed as preparation and training for involvement in collegiate sororities. YLSM's emphasis on members' social lives corresponded to other status-based activities that encouraged youth to socialize within class-defined social circles, putting YLSM in a class with "country clubs, debutante balls, and the fraternity or sorority systems that encourage the children of the affluent to 'run in the right circles'" (Milner 2006:28).

Most YLSM members were heavily involved in their schools and their churches, participating in activities such as student council, clubs, sports, and advanced academic programs, as well as both school- and church-based Christian youth groups. YLSM as an institution prided itself on its parental involvement, lack of hazing initiation rituals, and the "high morals" of its members as manifested in its emphasis on community service and discouraging of behavior viewed as illicit, such as underage drinking and sexual activity. Thus, the model YLSM persona valued sociability, kindness, civic responsibility, and morality, recalling traditional roles of upper-class women as social and moral leaders, similar to the roles of women in Southern collegiate sororities during the twentieth century (Freeman 2011).

3.1.3. Members of YLSM

While YLSM was founded in the late 1940s as a social club for students at a whites-only public school in the center of Midway, it had adapted over time to changes in the demographic landscape of the city and the addition of new schools. With the expansion of the Midway public school system, as well as the founding of private schools

during the 1950s and 1960s, partially a result of desegregation, YLSM also expanded to include students attending not only Davis High School, but also four additional high schools. Since that time, it has continued to draw its members from only five high schools, despite further expansion of the city and the public school system: Davis and Baldwin High Schools, both public and centrally located within Midway, as well as the private schools St. Paul, Madison Heights, and Fairmont High Schools. During my fieldwork, YLSM averaged about 35 members from each of these five schools although membership in the organization was valued more at some schools than at others. For example, the typically low numbers at Davis High School were partially the result of competition with MDC, the other high school sorority that operated only at that school.

The public and private schools in Midway have starkly different demographic climates, specifically racially and socioeconomically. Davis and Baldwin High Schools, both public schools with comparable racial statistics, served approximately 1,000 students each, with the racial makeup of the student bodies at Davis and Baldwin shown in Figure 3.2[10] represented as an average of the two schools (U.S. Department of Education 2012). The racial makeup of these two public schools closely mirrors that of the city of Midway (Figure 3.3) (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a), which was nearly evenly divided between black and white residents. The school district that supported Davis and Baldwin High Schools included families with a range of incomes: according to the *2009 American Community Survey* of the U.S. Census, the median annual income in the district was $50,000, but the mean was $70,000, showing skewing from much higher earning

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[10] The labels for the racial/ethnic categories displayed here are taken from the Department of Education's statistical standards (U.S. Department of Education 2012). I use those terms in these figures and in discussion for consistency with their source.

outliers. Similarly, the median home value in the district was $123,000, but some homes ranged upwards of $1,000,000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010b).

In contrast to Davis and Baldwin, the private schools that YLSM members attended—St. Paul, Madison Heights, and Fairmont High Schools—had overwhelmingly white student populations (Figure 3.4) (U.S. Department of Education 2012) as a result of racially segregated religious affiliation, past anti-integration sentiment, and the high tuitions charged by private schools. The upper-middle class families who could afford to pay annual tuitions between $10,000 and $16,000 per child were typically white, reflecting the continued interconnectedness of race and socioeconomic status in the South as well as elsewhere in the United States.
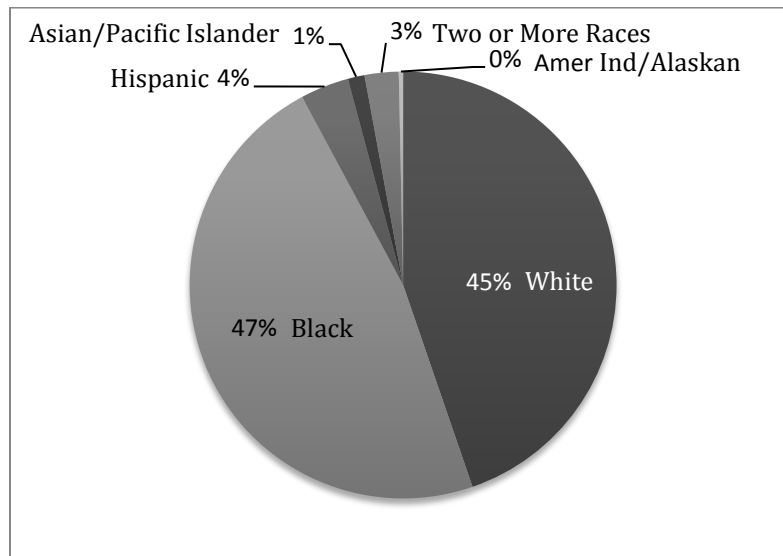
Figure 3.2. Racial/Ethnic enrollment at Midway public high schools: Davis and Baldwin
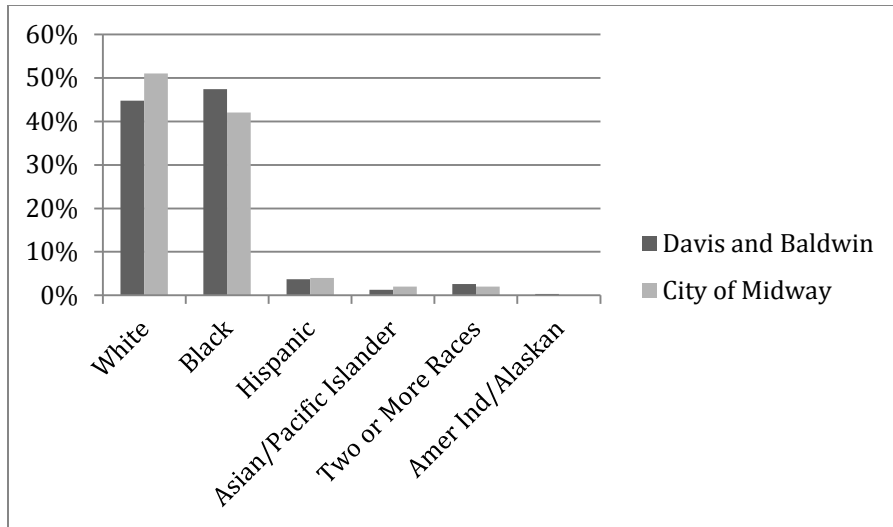
Figure 3.3. Racial/Ethnic statistics for public schools and city
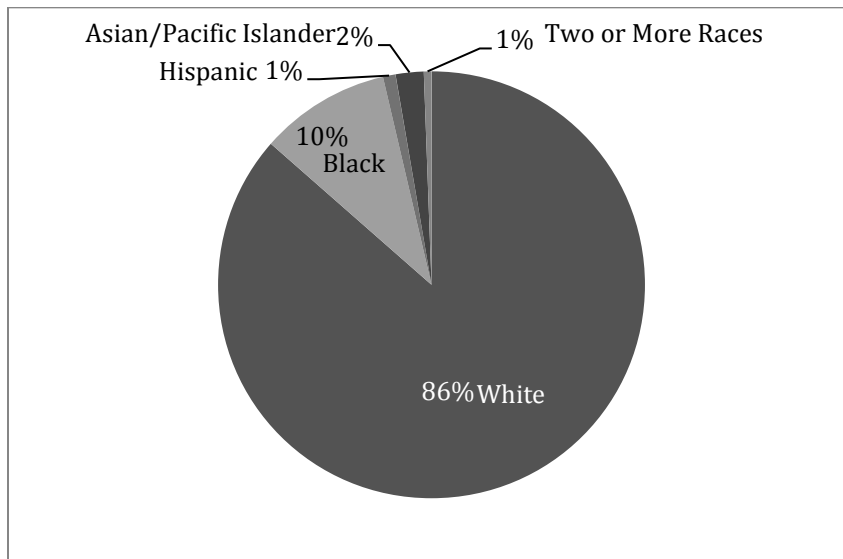
Figure 3.4. Racial/Ethnic statistics for private schools: Fairmont, Madison Heights, and St. Paul

YLSM's racial breakdown more closely mirrored that found at the private schools

in Midway than at the public schools. While YLSM did not have an official policy

restricting the race of its members, nearly all members were white (around 95 percent). Its members were drawn from private schools with overwhelmingly white and upper-middle class student populations and from public schools with social networks segregated by numerous characteristics, including race and socioeconomic status (cf. McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook 2001).

3.1.4. Race and YLSM

YLSM's recruitment procedures and membership policies, which privileged friends of members over other students, led to the continued socioeconomic and racial homogeneity of YLSM. Racial segregation among friendship groups and social organizations may be more pervasive in the South than elsewhere, even if it is not exclusive to the South. The contentious history of race relations, attitudes, and legal restrictions in the South, stemming from the institutionalized slavery of blacks by whites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and legal restrictions on non-whites through much of the twentieth century, have led to enduring racial and economic boundaries between neighborhoods, schools districts, and churches, and white and black Southerners often maintain their own separate social networks. Social organizations for young women are no exception to this broader pattern of racial segregation. For example, in the South, as in other parts of the United States, a select group of young women debut at a cotillion or debutante ball, although white and black girls overwhelmingly do so separately at events hosted by exclusively white or exclusively black societies (cf. Lynch 1999; Lewis 2012; Marling 2004).

Southern identities are inextricably tied to racial identities, and the history of race relations in the South shaped the ways that YLSM members oriented to each other, to

others, and to racial identities that circulated in their community. For many whites in the South, regional identity is seen as a kind of substitute for racial identity while many African Americans in the South highlight only their racial identities without identifying personally with the region (Thompson & Sloan 2012). Some white Southerners cling to their regional identity as an alternative to a "bland, normative racial identity" (Thompson & Sloan 2012), illustrating that Southern identity may be seen as a "quasi-ethnicity" among whites (Reed 1986). In particular, Cobb (1999b) describes a certain subset of middle- and upper-class white Southerners, a group that would include white YLSM members, as "identity-challenged," referring specifically to the tension between highlighting a white Southern identity and facing the negative perceptions of white Southerners as racist.

The YLSM community was overwhelmingly white, both within and outside of the organization's boundaries, including in social circles at schools, in churches, and in neighborhoods. Because race talk was often seen as taboo in these various settings, this topic was almost entirely erased from conversation (Irvine & Gal 2000). Researchers have brought attention to whiteness, often arguing specifically for the value of discourse analytic approaches in examining the ways that individuals and institutions, such as schools, both talk about race and avoid talking about race (cf. Hartigan 1999; Pollock 2009). Although YLSM members defined themselves relative to others in terms of models of identity that were gendered and classed as well as raced, they reproduced discourses of white colorblindness (McElhinny 2001; Bucholtz 2011) in part by privileging their regional identities over race as is common among white Southerners. As

noted by these scholars, colorblind discourses can reproduce racial hierarchies by erasing non-white peoples and overlooking the mechanisms of racism.

In my three years of fieldwork with YLSM and in my interviews, race was only mentioned explicitly a handful of times and was more often indirectly implicated in the girls' other identities, for example as upper-class or preppy, two categories in which whiteness is an unmarked default (see Chapter 5 for more on whiteness and Southern social types). Recognizing its taboo status and not wanting to offend my research participants, I never broached the subject. As a white Southerner myself, I recognize that in this aspect of my data collection I was, thus, complicit in reproducing the status quo of white privilege and colorblindness within the community.

3.1.5. Preppy Southern identity in YLSM

YLSM members' understandings of their regional identities and their ideologies of language and race were shaped by their race, class, and gender positioning. Specifically, they oriented to local images of white Southernness that closely reflected their lived experiences as white upper-class girls; they described themselves as embodying a "preppy Southern" identity. The term "preppy" originated as a descriptor for college preparatory school and Ivy League social culture among an economically privileged class of white Americans particularly in the Northeast (Birnbach 1980; Birnbach & Kidd 2010; Wallace 2005), though the term eventually expanded semantically to denote white, socioeconomically privileged populations in high school settings across the United States (e.g., Chun 2007; Bucholtz 2011). However, among the YLSM community, preppy was a category defined not only by whiteness and economic privilege but also by Southern identity. For example, when asked if they thought of their

classmates as Southern, one YLSM member responded that in her social network, "the preppy people" were seen as the most Southern. YLSM members in general were seen as preppy also, as when Julie, a YLSM member herself, described quintessential YLSM members according to socioeconomic class as well as Christian character: "it's like the preppy girls that have like money, and… go to like church, are very involved in their church lives," recalling the origins of the preppy set as WASPs—White Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

According to high school sorority members, "preppy Southernness" referred to a particular Southern subculture whose class status was marked by consumption practices that included wearing clothing and accessories, such as seersucker dresses and suits, bowties, and pearls, and buying expensive brands like Lilly Pulitzer and Southern Tide. They also engaged in leisure activities that required economic privilege, such as horseback riding, sailing, golfing, and country club membership. In the YLSM community, the label "preppy" was most often applied to white individuals, but individuals of other races could also enact preppy identities, for example by privileging classed and gendered practices over raced ones (cf. Foley 1990; Ortner 2003 on the importance of class distinctions).

While "preppy" was used to describe both male and female Southerners, there were distinct ways that each gendered version of preppy identity was enacted. Preppy Southern girls strove to be polite, cute, and outgoing—in short, to exude "Southern charm" (see Chapter 4). Meanwhile, Southern boys constructed their preppy masculinity by engaging in heteronormative practices, specifically, acting courteously towards girls in homage to Southern gentlemanly behavior (see Chapter 5). These classed and gendered

attributes of "Southern preppiness" recalled the white aristocratic class of the Old South, similar to the "belle" and "gentleman," although sorority members characterized these latter terms as outdated.

The YLSM crowd therefore represented a narrow subset of the population of the South and of Midway. While this group was not representative of Southerners as a whole, they did represent a particular side of Southern life that has been dismissed in the linguistic literature on "authentic" Southerners, which has typically focused on older, rural participants. YLSM members were not only young and urban, but they also came from a privileged racial and socioeconomic class in Midway. Because these girls remained firmly rooted in their local and regional setting, they offer insight into how young Southerners understand their regional positioning in an increasingly globalized and modernized era.

3.1.6. Notes on labeling

Throughout this dissertation, I adopt terms for social categories that were commonly used among YLSM members to describe their own social and cultural perspectives. While I recognize the problematic (e.g., sexist and classist) perspectives that some of these terms may invoke, I have typically opted for emic labels given my goal of describing locally relevant meanings. First, I often refer to YLSM members as "girls," rather than "young women" or "female adolescents," despite the potential pejorative gender associations of the former. I do so because "girls" was used in self-referential practice among LFG members, and it was also a common term used in the sorority literature.

These girls also often referred to themselves as "preppy" and talked about other types of Southern identities using labels such as "redneck," "hillbilly," and "country." While these are vague social constructs, I use these terms to indicate emic understandings of what these categories of Southernness entailed, as described in the previous section, as well as how they were defined in opposition, described in more detail in upcoming chapters, such as Chapter 5. Therefore, these terms will appear in quotation marks only when I am metalinguistically referring to the label itself, not to the social identity that the label describes.

Additionally, while academic discourses often contrast lower socioeconomic classes with middle-class ones, class distinctions in the local YLSM culture implicitly contrasted lower and upper classes. Economic privilege maintained divisions of upper/lower cultural spaces in a variety of ways, including YLSM parents paying high tuitions so their children could attend private schools, residing in certain neighborhoods and gated subdivisions, participating in expensive hobbies which often included private lessons in activities like horseback riding and tennis, as well as membership in exclusive local clubs, such as country clubs and dining and social clubs. Socioeconomic class, like race, was rarely discussed explicitly among YLSM members, likely a result of the practice of silence on topics of privilege among privileged people. However, in implicit ways, their own socioeconomic status was made relevant in the process of defining Southern identities, their own and those of others, and the manifestations of socioeconomic privilege among the YLSM community seemed to index a higher status than commonplace notions of middle-class American life. While these girls never explicitly labeled their own socioeconomic class or that of others, I use the terms "upper

class" and "lower class" to refer to their own positioning and the positioning of others relative to them because they highlight the relational nature of such social distinctions; however, I recognize that these labels obscure some degree of nuance.

3.2. Methods of data collection

3.2.1. Researcher positioning

My entry into the YLSM community was largely a smooth one. In important ways, I was considered a member of the community, both because of my personal history and identity: As a white female from a Southern upper-middle class family, I had grown up in Midway in some of the same social circles as YLSM members, and I had been acquainted with Ms. Jones, the sorority advisor, since my own adolescence through a few mutual acquaintances. She accepted my offer to help out with YLSM as a way to meet its members as potential research participants. I was introduced to the group in the fall of 2010, when I attended the first meeting of the school year, and I attended meetings and conducted interviews over the following three years. The older members of the sorority remained somewhat skeptical of my presence and my role in their organization, but to the groups of new members who joined every semester, my presence was unremarkable. Therefore, over the course of each following semester, I was seen by a greater proportion of YLSM members as a fixture in the group rather than as an interloper, someone who was present at all sorority functions, meetings, initiation ceremonies, and formal dances.

My role in the sorority remained relatively consistent during the course of my fieldwork. Given an official role as an "advisor," I initially handled administrative aspects of YLSM as an organization. For example, I managed the roster of all members, including updating the roster based on new membership and members who had graduated or moved, and I typed all correspondence from YLSM to its members, including

informational letters and schedules of meetings. My advisory role in YLSM remained

primarily behind the scenes; during meetings, I typically sat next to Ms. Jones although

she continued to lead the meetings without my help. She introduced me to the group as a

friend and new advisor for YLSM, and she allowed me time to explain that my research

interests had also motivated my involvement.

Members viewed me as an approachable advisor who understood the complex

social lives of teenage girls. While Ms. Jones, in her late sixties, had her experience

behind her as an advisor to the group, the girls often saw me as an older peer with whom

they could identify: I was only ten years older than many YLSM members, and I had

graduated from the same high school attended by some of the members. Ms. Jones

insisted that I call her by her first name to put us on equal footing in YLSM meetings, yet

I often called her "Ms. Jones," both as an unconscious choice that reflected the title I had

used during my adolescence, and as a conscious effort to adopt the practices of current

YLSM members. YLSM members engaged with me in a relatively informal manner and

always called me by my first name.

3.2.2. Researcher positioning and perspective

My use of a set of ethnographic research methods contributes a valuable

perspective, grounding my analysis of linguistic features and speech within a particular

cultural and interactional context (cf. Rampton 2010). I follow the methodological

practices of other sociolinguists who have connected local in-depth ethnography with

larger scale linguistic phenomena, such as Eckert's (2000) research on the Northern

Cities Shift based on its manifestation in a Detroit area high school. Many of these

ethnographies focus on communities defined by youth (Chun 2007; Mendoza-Denton

2008; Bucholtz 2011) as well as by place (Modan 2007) and on the nuances of social

identities and linguistic practices as they intersect with race, nationality, and gender.

Ethnographic research positions both researcher and participants relative not only to each

other but also to various subjects, identities, and language varieties in local cultural

contexts.

My goal in long-term participant observation was to get to know the YLSM group

as a community, as well as to know members individually, in order to situate my research

culturally. My own experience growing up in the local community also informed my

interactions with YLSM members as well as informing my understanding of their roles in

school and the city-wide community. For example, when individuals made local

references, such as to specific neighborhoods, churches, and schools, my background in

the community allowed me to understand the relevance and the salient features of such

institutions, whether their location, history, or demographic character. At the same time, I

also relied on my role as a researcher to elicit additional information about YLSM

members' understandings of those particular places.

3.2.3. Linguistic data

Sociolinguistic fieldwork is sometimes believed to involve what Labov (1972b)

has called the "observer's paradox:" the authentic speech that a researcher seeks to

capture is necessarily made inauthentic by the researcher's presence. There are a number

of ways that this potential problem was mitigated or addressed. First, my cultivated long-

term relationships with research participants through extended participation in their

community reduced the barriers to casualness and naturalness that often accompany

recording conversations and interviews. Second, my own identity as a white young

woman from the local community highlighted our demographic and cultural similarities and mitigated the differences in our statuses as researcher and participant, or interviewer and interviewee. Finally, I recognize that all speech is situated within certain contexts, but I do not prioritize an idealized authentic vernacular as the single goal of this sociolinguistic research. Like others who have critiqued the emphasis that sociolinguistic research often puts on vernacular speech (e.g., Bucholtz 2003; Schilling 2013), I also viewed these recordings as seeking a relatively casual and informal style of speech, rather than seeking a single authentic style. Specifically, I viewed the speech recorded during interviews as a style of authentic speech regardless of its level of formality. YLSM members used a variety of speech styles in their daily lives, speaking not only to their peers in relaxed contexts, but to adults, acquaintances, and strangers in styles that were nonetheless authentically their own.

I audio-recorded 20 hours of interaction in three kinds of settings, including eleven individual ethnographic interviews, seven casual group interviews, and seven sorority meetings. Individual interviews provided me with valuable insight into the emic perceptions of the role of YLSM in various friendship groups, high schools, and in the city-wide community as well, although I recognize that my positioning as a local white young woman, and sometimes as a representative of the sorority, affected my relationships and interactions with participants, perhaps assuming shared knowledge or privileging or deemphasizing certain topics (Briggs 1986). Like Goodwin (2006), Chun (2007), Bucholtz (2011) and many other sociolinguistic researchers who privilege group interactions over one-on-one recordings, I conducted group interviews that were designed to put participants at ease by providing them with more conversational partners to rely on

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(between two and five) and by taking the pressure off a single person. In fact, the interpersonal dynamics and linguistic interactions in these group recordings closely approximated the kinds of casual conversations that I observed before and after, and occasionally during, sorority meetings. While interviews may be critiqued for their presentation of an inauthentic self, the interview itself may be viewed as an authentic linguistic interaction (Johnstone 1995; Schiffrin 1993; Schilling-Estes 2004). Individual and group interviews require that subjects position themselves with respect to others, including the researcher, and to relevant topics. The language and the language ideologies that emerged during this type of recording were no doubt shaped by my own role as a white young adult female also native to the South, yet they remain useful venues for the investigation of how YLSM members understood and constructed their identities relative to various local and national social norms.

I also recorded sorority meetings, providing various kinds of linguistic data for analysis. For example, when a single person held the floor, such as the sorority president leading the meeting, the relatively high audio quality lent itself well to close phonetic analysis. Additionally, these recordings also picked up many quiet and overlapping conversations, include those which were either related to the day's business or were gossip between members, and while these recordings were useful for their content and were ethnographically informative, the reduced recording quality of these peripheral conversations prohibited detailed analysis of the linguistic forms used.

My ethnographic participant-observation provided me with opportunities to interact with and observe YLSM members and determine whether my audio-recorded data were representative of typical talk within the community. My role as a participant-

observer also allowed me access to non-spoken language use, such as sorority discourses used in YLSM literature, official correspondence, and various artifacts, including sorority T-shirts and dance decorations. These types of documents provided me with an additional perspective both on the sorority as an institution and on the ways the sorority and its members addressed similar issues.

3.2.4. Participants

During the course of my three years of fieldwork, I met and interacted with over 200 girls. Each year, there was an average of 130 members in YLSM, with new members admitted each semester and around 40 seniors graduating each year. I became most acquainted with the more active members, although I sought out opportunities to audio-record girls from each school and girls with different levels of participation in YLSM.

The following table (Table 3.1) lists the 13 speakers who appear in this dissertation; they are listed by pseudonym and by high school, although as an inter-school community, YLSM made school affiliation less important than it may have been in other adolescent communities. Following Johnstone and Bean (1997) and Johnstone (1999), this dissertation provides a close analysis of a small number of speakers, those viewed as "typical" and "exceptional speakers" (Hall 2003) both by the YLSM community and by myself. The speakers I focus on in this dissertation were chosen primarily because I regarded them as "typical" speakers, among the many YLSM girls with whom I interacted, for reasons I explain below. Julie and Charlotte, however, were the exceptions, as evidenced in the ways these two girls talked about their relationship with the South and their own language practices (for further description of Julie as an exceptional YLSM member, see Chapter 6).

Like the YLSM community more generally, which was primarily white and upper class, the 13 speakers listed below are also white and upper-class. I recognize that focusing on this set of speakers may reproduce the race and class privilege that pervaded the YLSM community by erasing the perspectives of other students who identified in other ways. Yet I have chosen this set because it allows for an examination of processes of racial and socioeconomic privilege from the perspective of those in positions of privilege.

I further identify each of these 13 speakers according to their Southern identities, specifically in relation to preppy Southern identity. To characterize speakers' Southern identities, I relied on responses from conversations in which participants made explicit claims regarding their own preppy Southern identities as well as on my own insights about any degree of ambivalence or hesitation in claiming a regional identity. Within YLSM there were many ways to present a persona as preppy (see Sections 3.1.5 and 4.2); therefore, I considered both whether individuals labeled themselves as "preppy" along with semiotic displays of their racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, for example, as manifest in material styles locally identified as preppy. For the girls listed below, there was never a case of conflict between these two sources: for example, the girls who self-identified as "preppy" engaged in semiotic displays of that identity, including wearing certain clothing styles and pearls to sorority meetings (see Section 3.1.5), and those who disaligned from preppy Southernness typically did not. While non-preppy Southern identities did exist locally, few, if any, YLSM members would claim them, at least to my knowledge. For example, a few YLSM members did engage in practices that might be regarded as those of a stereotypical redneck, such as listening to country music and

dating boys who hunted and drove trucks, but these girls did not refer to themselves as rednecks, and they also engaged in preppy practices, such as by wearing preppy clothing and running in preppy social circles.

Table 3.1 Participants cited in analyses

Pseudonym	High School	Southern Identity
Lydia	St. Paul	Preppy
Amanda	St. Paul	Preppy
Emily	St. Paul	Preppy
Whitney	St. Paul	Preppy
Karen	Fairmont	Preppy
Claire	Fairmont	Preppy
Liza	Fairmont	Preppy
Molly	Davis	Preppy
Peyton	Baldwin	Preppy
Taylor	Madison Heights	Ambivalent
Lauren	Fairmont	Ambivalent
Julie	Fairmont	Resistant
Charlotte	Fairmont	Resistant

3.3. Methods of data analysis

3.3.1. Transcription

Linguistic analysis requires transcription, a process that transforms audio data into text data. This process is an important stage of the analysis (Ochs 1979), reflecting the researcher's perceptions of which linguistic and contextual elements are relevant and how language should be represented. Such decisions reflect my personal expectations and goals as a researcher (Bucholtz 2000) but also strive to represent participants' emic understandings of their own language use.

The following transcription conventions are based on those common in sociolinguistic data attending to the interactional structure of conversation, with each line representing a single intonation unit. All names in data excerpts are pseudonyms,

including personal, school, and place names, and other identifying details have been

replaced. The following conventions are adapted from Bucholtz (2011) and attend to the

aspects of conversation that will be analyzed in the following chapters:

?	rising intonation
↑	rising pitch accent
↓	falling pitch accent
italics	emphatic stress
°	quiet speech
:	lengthening of the preceding sound
=	latching, marked by a lack of pause between turns or intonation units
-	self-interruption, break in sound
.	a brief pause of less than 0.5 seconds
(n.n)	a measured pause of more than 0.5 seconds, with the length provided
[ ]	overlapping speech
[2 2]	overlapping speech in proximity to other overlap
( )	uncertain transcription
#	unintelligible speech, each # represents one syllable
" "	reported speech or thought
{ }	markedly Southern speech
(( ))	researcher's comment on the speech
bold underlined	speech or linguistic forms of analytic interest
…	omitted material

There are two conventions I use to indicate Southern speech that require mention.

First, given that my research participants were native Southerners, they used numerous

features that might be heard as Southern to outsiders but that were regionally unmarked

according to local standards. My transcription draws attention only to moments of

highlighted regional contrast that were relevant to participants; although the analysis in

Chapter 6 also attends to regional linguistic features that may have remained below the

level of awareness. Second, I use the label "Southern speech," marked with braces around

particular segments, to mark contrastive style-shifts between entire phrases or intonation

units. To the right of the bracketed segments, I provide details of the relevant regional

linguistic features, including phonological, lexical, and grammatical features that have

been previously described by linguists as Southern, as well as features that have been less

often described, such as deliberately slowed speech tempo. These are outlined based on

my impressionistic analysis, with the exception of the data described in Chapter 6 that

rely on additional methods of acoustic analysis.

3.3.2. Analyzing language ideology and linguistic variation

The transcription of data allows me to attend to the ways that salient linguistic

features are embedded in conversations, a fundamental component of discourse analysis

(Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974; Keating & Egbert 2004). Such attention to the

occurrence of marked linguistic features in combination with commentary on language

and regional ideologies highlights the ways that indexical meanings emerge through and

across interactions, rather than viewing indexical meanings as a priori assumptions.

My ethnographic perspective is essential in tracing language ideologies across the

community, as both a long-term member of the local community and based on my

participant observation with YLSM specifically. The bulk of data analyzed in this

dissertation come from moments in which the topic of language was made explicit,

moments that thus illustrate how language ideologies are manifest in conversation; such

topics were sometimes brought about by my role as a linguist and interviewer but were

also often brought up by participants on their own. By focusing my analysis primarily on

metalinguistic commentary, I investigate the ways that individuals understand and orient

to language variation and the use of specific linguistic varieties. Other sociolinguistic

researchers have similarly examined participants' metalinguistic commentary as evidence

of their language ideologies, both alone and in combination with the speakers' own linguistic practices (Johnstone 1999; Hall-Lew & Stephens 2012; Nylund 2013). Such a focus on language ideology and social identity also mirrors the principles that underlie perceptual and folk linguistics, research which explores the ways non-linguists understand the relationship between language variation and social identities (Preston & Long 1999; Preston 2004; Niedzielski & Preston 2003).

In addition to direct metalinguistic commentary, language ideologies were also evidenced when participants performed imitations of others who were thought to sound markedly different. Such imitations, often for humorous effect, typically draw on salient linguistic features to construct caricatures of speakers (Mesthrie 2002; Chun 2004; Labrador 2004), but imitations also provide one way to elicit indirect commentary on phonological variation, rarely articulated in metalinguistic talk (Niedzielski & Preston 2003; Hall-Lew & Stephens 2012).

In Chapter 6, my analysis examines phonetic variation in the speech of two individuals, comparing the use of two vowel features both quantitatively in unmarked speech and qualitatively in stylized speech. My specific methods for these analyses are described in that chapter. This chapter combines my analysis of language ideologies, social identities, and phonetic features in describing the language beliefs and practices of two speakers who were viewed as typifying two different ways to be Southern: one as a typical preppy Southern girl and one who resisted being identified as Southern. These judgments were based both in their community and in my ethnographic understanding of the two individuals, whose speech represented what Hall (2003) describes as the speech of "typical" and "exceptional speakers." This chapter also follows Johnstone and Bean

(1997) and Johnstone (1999) in examining the language practices of a small number of speakers; while generally rare in sociolinguistics, this method offers a venue for examining language variation in close detail that is often unavailable otherwise.

Chapter 4. The Ideological Distinction Between Form and Function

Southerners are typically accustomed to the negative portrayals of their regional identity that pervade national consciousness, yet they are also aware of competing positive images: for example, they acknowledge the coexisting complementary perceptions of redneck ignorance and aristocratic refinement (see Chapter 5). These stereotypes shape the dual indexical value not only of Southern identities but also of Southern accents, which has been documented in perceptual linguistic studies: Southerners are at once the most pleasant-sounding and the most incorrect speakers in the United States according to Southerners and non-Southerners alike (Preston 1996; Fridland, Bartlett & Kreuz 2005; Fridland 2008).

This widespread ambivalence towards Southern language leaves open the question of how YLSM members, a group of white, upper-class girls in the urban South, might define their identities and situate their language practices in response. In this chapter, I analyze explicit and implicit evidence of language ideologies from six interviews among a total of ten representative YLSM members, illustrating two ways that YLSM members connected language and region with social value when they distinguished between different types of Southern identities according to the different functions and forms of Southern language. First, YLSM members privileged the pragmatic functions of Southern language and ascribed positive value to its discursive dimensions, for example in embracing the virtues of acting like a polite and charming Southerner. They did this by highlighting acts of "politeness," "etiquette," and

"hospitality," constructing stances that were often circulated within the YLSM community as essential elements of a preppy Southern identity. Second, they simultaneously distanced themselves from the types of Southerners who had "Southern accents." In doing so, they assigned negative value to the structure of Southern language, overlooking regional morpho-syntactic forms and focusing instead on regional phonological forms. YLSM members may have admitted to having Southern accents themselves, yet they claimed that their accents were less marked than those of others by using hedging devices to construct accents as gradient and context-specific, defined both contrastively and situationally. They also drew distinctions between different types of Southerners along linguistic as well as social boundaries, linking Southern accents with those Southern identities defined as "redneck," rural, and lacking an appropriate level of social decorum. In constructing Southern accents as negative while Southern behaviors remained positive, YLSM members reproduced an ideology that prejudiced *sounding* like a Southerner, while *acting* Southern remained a redeeming quality for their own type of preppy Southern identity.

Finally, I examine how this ideological distinction between the use and structure of Southern language, along with their corresponding valences, shaped not only the identities of various Southern speakers, but contributed to the indexical value of other structural elements of Southern language. Specifically, I show that the social value of a Southern word—the second-person plural pronoun "yall"—was influenced by its contextualization in relation to the significance of Southern pragmatic acts and phonological forms, just as these contexts can shape Southern identities. By distancing themselves from the types of people who have Southern accents, YLSM members

reproduced hegemonic ideologies that essentialized and devalued Southern language

forms and identities. At the same time, by embracing Southern politeness, they managed

to inhabit a positive Southern linguistic identity, despite the risk of stigma, distancing

themselves from negative regional stereotypes and praising and identifying with the

social functions of Southern language.

4.1. Social meanings of Southern language practices

As discussed earlier, the value of Southern language is not singular: Southern

speech is characterized by both its incorrectness and its pleasantness (Preston 1996;

Preston & Robinson 2008), a perception that persists even within the South (Preston

1996; Fridland, Bartlett & Kreuz 2005; Fridland 2008). Sociolinguists have explored the

complex array of social meanings associated with Southern language, in particular how

place identity intersects with other social identities, such as race, sex, and socioeconomic

class, as well as with more nuanced distinctions particularly relevant within the South,

specifically the white South, such as rurality, intellect, and refinement. They have shown

that the precise indexical meanings of Southern language are not universal but are

specific to local and community settings: for example, in Memphis, researchers (Fridland,

Bartlett & Kreuz 2005; Fridland & Bartlett 2007; Fridland 2008; Kendall & Fridland

2010) have found that what it means to sound Southern depends on the interplay between

both regional and local context, where "locally-constructed meaning and norms are

particularly important in shaping the salience of specific vowel variants" (Fridland &

Bartlett 2007:38). That is, the particular embedding of language practices within

Southern communities ties different types of Southern speech to different types of

Southern identities. The multiplicity and complexity of Southern language practices,

Southern identities, and language ideologies contributes to the prevalence of linguistic

insecurity in the South, further influencing speakers' particular attitudes and uses of

elements of Southern speech (Lippi-Green 2012).

Some of the complexity with respect to Southern language ideologies derives

from the various linguistic factors involved, including structural distinctiveness and

salience. Many sociolinguists have found that the particular type of structural variation

(e.g. phonological, lexical, or morpho-syntactic) influences the ways that linguistic

features are tied to social meanings; for example, phonological and lexical features seem

to be more easily adopted by community outsiders than variation that exists at a morpho-

syntactic level (Labov 1972a; Rickford 1985; Labov & Harris 1986; Ash & Myhill 1986;

Cutler 1999; Bucholtz 2011).[11] In other words, linguistic "features are not equal in

marking vernacularity" (Van Hofwegen & Wolfram 2010:443). Additionally, linguistic

features across these structural levels have different degrees of salience and are,

therefore, associated with social stigma in different ways; for example, morpho-syntactic

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[11] Many of the studies that have addressed the differences in social meanings based on type of variation focus on African American Vernacular English. Many note that speakers seem to be more aware of distinctive phonological and lexical features while they may be unable to comment on, adapt to, or imitate variation that exists at a morpho-syntactic level. For example, Labov's (1980) revisiting of Hatala's (1976) linguistic description of Carla, a white teenager in an African American community who adopts many elements of BEV (Black English Vernacular), demonstrates that while Carla uses lexical, phonological, and prosodic features of BEV, she does not fully use the corresponding grammatical system. In black and white Philadelphia communities, both Ash & Myhill (1986) and Labov & Harris (1986) illustrate similar findings that "the phonological and lexical features of BEV are far more accessible than the grammatical features" (Ash & Myhill 1986:40). In the specific context of the Sea Islands of South Carolina, Rickford (1985) shows that phonological and lexical forms are comparable across racial groups while racial distinctions are maintained by the use of morpho-syntactic features. More recently, Cutler (1999) and Bucholtz (2011) specifically examine how white individuals adopt African American linguistic practices, particularly in hip-hop cultures, finding that stereotypical lexical items and phonological features are more likely to be used than the grammatical patterns of AAVE.

variants may be easily recognized, although not adopted, and are often stigmatized with their labeling as "ungrammatical" features (Preston 1996). Speakers' metapragmatic beliefs—that is, those explicitly articulated—about various language practices and their social meanings must be understood as a function of the ways that these indexical meanings derive from both linguistic structures and ideologies (Silverstein 2001).

Some of the more salient features that identify Southern speech include phonological features, such as glide-weakened /ai/ (Plichta & Preston 2005; Torbert 2010), lexical features such as "yall" and "ma'am," (Ching 1988; Davies 1997; Tillery, Wikle & Bailey 2000), and morpho-syntactic variants such as the use of multiple modals (Bernstein 2003; Mishoe & Montgomery 1994). Meanwhile, pragmatic norms of Southern speech, such as particular styles and politeness, also serve as discourse-level markers of Southern language practices (Davies 1997; Johnstone 2003), yet they remain less explored in linguistic literature. Following Montgomery's (1997:18–19) call for research on the social uses of Southern linguistic forms, this chapter examines the ways that structural forms as well as types of Southern language practices tied to specific social qualities, such as politeness and hospitality, can construct various Southern identities.

In doing so, this chapter moves beyond some of the previous research on Southern language and explores the relationship between linguistic features and social meanings; it focuses particularly on the ways that language ideologies shape the emergent social meanings of language use, for example, as grounded in the specificities of local situations and contexts. For example, I follow Johnstone (1999; 2003) who has shown in her study of Texas women that the social meanings attached to "Southern-sounding speech" may in fact be more important than the forms of that speech. In other words, Southern identities

can be thought of as discursive products, constructed through indexicality, a process by which semiotic forms, including material and linguistic signs, reflect and create social meaning. Similar to Ochs's (1992) account of indirect indexicality with respect to gendered language, the connection between linguistic forms, like a glide-weakened pronunciation of /ai/, and social meanings, such as "Southern," are often not in one-to-one correspondence, because social categories are "constituted and mediated by the relation of language to stances, social activities, and other social constructs" (337). That is, language does not need to directly indicate a particular social identity, but it can evoke stances, acts, and activities that are associated with that identity. Similarly attending to the related levels of social meaning that a language feature can index, Silverstein (2003) suggests that linguistic variables may take on different but related, and often competing, social meanings over time when linguistic features are contextualized in a stylistic practice, community, or local setting. Thus, in this chapter, I show how the meaning and value of Southern language is constituted by mediating layers of meaning—stances and acts—and how meaning and value are emergent products of discourses and ideologies that serve speakers' sociocultural interests.

4.2. Acting Southern: Preppy Southern charm

In interviews, the topic of being Southern was often met with hesitation or overt negative commentary, reflecting YLSM members' reluctance to immediately align with this label. This hesitance seemed to arise from these girls' particular sociocultural position. On one hand, like many residents of the South, they recognized that their region remained ridiculed as backwards and accented in popular discourses; they distanced themselves from this hegemonic stereotype as members of an elite upper-class, urban

group. On the other hand, having been brought up in the South, they had learned to express a regional pride that abounds across the region. Yet even within the context of this larger regional pride, they were well aware of the wide variety of individuals, customs, and language practices to which the label "Southern" could refer. In order to claim pride in their own Southern identities, these girls circulated an ideology that described Southern identity in terms of distinct types: an upper-class preppy type like themselves and a lower-class uncultured type of *others*, often labeled "redneck," "hillbilly," or "country," those whose negative portrayals reflected hegemonic stereotypes of regional identity. These two disparate types of Southerners were defined not only socially but also by the language practices that YLSM members associated with each as reasons for their different social values.

The particular kind of preppy Southern identity with which these girls readily aligned was epitomized by class privilege, whiteness, and Christianity—reminiscent of the WASP social type—and described by these girls as free from regional stigma. Preppy Southerners were also marked by semiotic practices, such as wearing particular clothing brands and styles and adopting particular attitudes influenced by Christian morality and Southern etiquette. Both men and women could belong to the "preppy Southern" category, but when YLSM girls discussed preppy lifestyles, they talked about their own lifestyles, tending to cite feminine practices such as wearing pearls and enacting "Southern hospitality." Most YLSM members strongly and consistently identified specifically as preppy Southerners, including Lydia, Amanda, Emily, Whitney, Claire, Karen, and Molly. Others were more reluctant to claim their own Southern identity, such as Julie who often highlighted her outsider status living in the South with her non-

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Southern parents. Still other YLSM members, including Taylor and Lauren, remained ambivalent about asserting their preppy Southern identities, aligning with the South at some times and distancing themselves from it at other times.

While some preppy Southern social practices were enabled by socioeconomic status, such as belonging to a country club and wearing expensive clothing brands, the actions and attitudes of preppy Southerners were not simply the result of socioeconomic privilege: they were also shaped by accompanying language practices. Southern girls like YLSM members were taught to be polite and outgoing, enacting what YLSM girls believed to be the defining quality of Southern preppy femininity: "Southern charm." YLSM and its members valued social attitudes and stances that were seen as emblematic of this "charming" type of female Southern personhood. YLSM members strove to be "charming," which included being socially adept—polite, welcoming, graceful, and tactful—entailing a keen awareness of social expectations, obligations, and reputations. Accordingly, the goals of YLSM as an organization, as described in official sorority literature and as stated at the initiation ceremony for new members, included supporting its members in making new friends and for its members "to become comfortable in social situations" and "to acquire lifelong social skills." For example, YLSM provided a number of opportunities for its members to meet members from other schools, to socialize in heteronormative romantic contexts such as at YLSM dances and parties, and to talk with adults who hosted sorority meetings and chaperoned social functions. In these and other contexts, YLSM girls aligned with this notion of Southern charm by taking stances that were respectful and amiable, drawing on certain pragmatic Southern language practices, such as politeness and friendliness.

These attitudes of sociability and friendliness were championed locally and even explicitly embraced by the sorority, leading the girls to reference "Southern charm" in a slogan they printed on sorority t-shirts one year. As a play on the "Keep Calm and Carry On" meme that circulated in the early 2010s, YLSM printed t-shirts bearing the slogan "Keep Calm and have Southern Charm," personalizing the original slogan to one with regional value and emphasizing the feminine element by applying the phrase to an organization of women and printing the writing in bright pink.

Figure 4.1. The popular meme and the YLSM t-shirt it inspired

YLSM members discussed the importance of "Southern charm" as relevant not only in YLSM discourses and social events but also in their daily lives. As in the next example, taken from a loosely structured group interview, YLSM members talk about certain regional language practices as reflecting stances that are indicative of their own personas as well-mannered, outgoing, and "charming" Southern girls.

Example 4.1 "To have that Southern charm"

1	Lydia:	and we have good manners
2	Amanda:	to have that Southern charm
3	Whitney:	haha
4	Emily:	I think it's fun
5		you can just be like outgoing
6		and like
7		"hey yall"
8	Amanda:	"yall"
9	Lydia:	and cute
10	Amanda:	yeah
11	Emily:	and it's acceptable
12	Amanda:	like "yes ma'am no ma'am"

Example 4.1 illustrates a positive evaluation of Southern politeness that is associated with an "outgoing" and "cute" persona. Amanda labels this persona as one defined by taking stances that index "Southern charm" (line 2) and the surrounding conversation treats each of these other aspects in line with that notion. In other words, language practices index hospitable and friendly stances linked to "Southern charm," which in turn evoke a feminine preppy Southern identity. These girls understood that constructing this Southern persona required particular types of conversational work that were locally valued: initiating conversations with acquaintances through greetings such as "hey yall" (lines 7, 8); showing the proper respect for others through "good manners" (line 1) including polite terms of address like "ma'am" (line 12); and making conversational partners feel comfortable, through constructing an "outgoing" demeanor (line 5). This ideology concerning the appropriateness, or "acceptab[ility]" (line 11),[12] of

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[12] The line "and it's acceptable" (line 11) refers to previous talk that had included tales of peers traveling to the North (New Jersey in particular) and having their constant use of "sir" and "ma'am" treated as insults, following the non-Southern norm of "ma'am" as a term only for older women. Thus, when Emily says that being polite and outgoing are

using Southern manners to take stances of politeness that are embedded in Southern culture and to affect an air of "Southern charm" pervaded both local Southern culture and the YLSM community.

In the next example, Julie, an YLSM member born and raised in the South but with non-Southern parents, discusses learning to use "Southern manners" in interactions with other Southerners. As a self-described atypical Southerner and, by extension, also an atypical YLSM member, Julie reported finding the widespread use of Southern manners to be unfamiliar and somewhat foreign.

Example 4.2 "Southern manners"

1	Sara:	do you consider yourself Southern at all?
2	Julie:	um I would say
3		uh in some manner yes: uh
4		being brought up here
5		I [would say] you get the Southern manners
6	Sara:	[yeah]
7	Julie:	the Southern um
8		Southern lady
9		um etiquette almost
10		um
11		and I think that
12		that's definitely something really important e- e-
13		to many people like of my friends you know
14		they their parents expect them to say yes ma'am no sir
15	Sara:	yeah
16	Julie:	um
17		but
18		with my family that wasn't really the case ((laughing))
19	Sara:	[ok]
20	Julie:	[and so] that was really something I had to
21		like you know learn
22		because at home I don't have to do that
23	Sara:	[yeah]
24	Julie:	[but when I] go to my friends' houses
25		and I talk with their parents

"acceptable" in the South, she is referencing the shared understanding that the local norm of Southern usage does not hold in other regions.

26		then I definitely do have to turn on the Southern etiquette
27		because [here] it's it's less- it's more relaxed at my house ha
28	Sara:	[ok]
29	Julie:	than it is at other people's houses ((laughing))

Here Julie articulates an acute awareness both of the differences between Southern and non-Southern households and of the need to accommodate to the local norms of "Southern lady etiquette" by using "ma'am" and "sir" in homes that are more Southern and less "relaxed" than hers (line 24-29). Julie has learned from growing up in a community of Southerners the appropriate ways and times to affect a Southern persona in addressing adults, utilizing the functionality of this Southern language practice. Her ability to articulate the norms of politeness, specifically citing the address terms "ma'am" and "sir," reflects the salience of this linguistic practice in Julie's local social network and the importance of constructing polite stances that index Southern identity.[13]

Within a YLSM context specifically, observed at both meetings and social functions, polite address terms were often used in interactions between sorority members and adults. The use of these terms by YLSM girls to their parents was variable: some children were taught to use them categorically, while others tended to only use them in certain situations or perhaps only with certain adults, such as grandparents. However, "ma'am" was used almost categorically by girls to address their sorority advisor Ms. Jones, who was in her late 60s.[14] Her age, her position of authority, and the formality of

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[13] A few earlier studies have explored the pragmatic meanings and frequencies of use of "sir" and "ma'am," salient lexical features of Southern language and markers of polite pragmatic norms, although this research will not be discussed here (see Simpkins 1969; Wolfson & Manes 1980; Ching 1988; Davies 1997; Johnson 2008).

[14] Because of the nature of YLSM as an all-female group, I observed more tokens of "ma'am" than "sir" but have no reason to believe that one term is more commonly used than the other, given the appropriate context.

sorority meetings were contributing factors that led YLSM members to routinely address her as "ma'am."

YLSM is one of the small-scale social networks in which this group of girls learned the importance of "Southern charm," an expectation for "preppy Southerners" more generally. At a pragmatic level, using polite address terms and affecting an outgoing demeanor enabled these girls to present polite and friendly personas aligned with regional ideals of Southern hospitality and appropriate ways of performing the role of a young Southern woman. Specifically, YLSM members constructed pragmatic functions of Southern speech as not only positive but also essential to their identities as preppy Southern girls. In praising Southern language for its social functions and value, these girls aligned with the type of Southern identity defined by these uses, in part counterbalancing the numerous negative stereotypes of Southerners that circulate in national consciousness and erasing (Irvine & Gal 2000) the fact that structural linguistic features, in addition to pragmatic ones, may also define their own speech as Southern girls to some listeners.

4.3. Sounding Southern: Unrefined Southern accents

While accents are often thought to characterize the speech of *other* people, reflecting the perception of markedness in relation to one's own speech, Southerners, as speakers of a dialect that is often the subject of social commentary and ridicule, are relatively attuned to the fact that they are likely heard as using non-standard linguistic forms, including "an accent" (Lippi-Green 2012:218–222). Accordingly, YLSM members view Southern accents, specifically defined by regional phonological forms, as cause for stigma and ridicule. By contrast, other levels of Southern language structure

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went unnoticed for the most part, with the exceptions of a few lexical items and only "yall" as the single morpho-syntactic features cited. The lack of awareness of other linguistic variation in the South reflected the tendency for grammatical and phonological elements of language varieties to be subject to different levels of awareness (Labov 1972a; Cutler 1999; Bucholtz 2011). Having been brought up in homogenously upper-class and metropolitan settings, this split between awareness of variation at different levels of language structure is likely a result of YLSM members' general lack of exposure to the wide variety of Southern language forms that exist across the South, although it is also related to various restrictions on speakers' linguistic awareness (Silverstein 2001).

Reflecting their particular situatedness within the South, YLSM members tended to construct Southern identity in a positive light, highlighting factors like socioeconomic privilege and politeness that culminate into a particular type of preppy Southern identity that they embraced. Yet they also responded to the label "Southern" by distancing themselves from characteristics of "Southernness" that carried negative value, specifically including Southern accents, in a variety of ways. YLSM girls did not generally talk about themselves as sounding Southern, instead claiming to have only a small degree of a "Southern accent" or to only use an accent in particular moments. In other conversations, YLSM girls distanced themselves from others who sounded more Southern by distinguishing between types of Southern identity, like preppy and redneck Southerners, differentiated both socially and linguistically.

One of the common strategies that YLSM members used to distance themselves from the negative stereotypes of Southerners with strong regional accents was to define

accents in terms of degree. In the following example, Taylor responds to a question about

whether she considers herself Southern by discussing Southern linguistic identity as both

gradient and relative.

Example 4.3 "I hope my voice isn't like too Southern"

1	Sara:	how Southern do you think you are
2	Taylor:	°gosh
3		(1.4)
4		hopefully
5		I hope my voice isn't like too Southern
6		but my friend from Chicago
7	Sara:	uhuh
8	Taylor:	says it's really Southern
9		but
10		she has a really Ch- Chicago
11		accent so

Taylor, like both of her parents, had lived in the South her whole life. Yet when I

ask her about her regional identity (line 1), she is reluctant to call herself "Southern." Her

initial reaction is the quiet exclamation "gosh" followed by a pause (lines 2-3),

acknowledging "Southern" as a stigmatized label. Her hesitation to align herself with

Southern identity becomes explicit when she states that she "hopes" not to sound

Southern (lines 4-5). Elaborating on sounding Southern, Taylor uses intensifiers like

"too" and "really" that treat Southern as a gradable identity, operating along a

continuum.[15] The notion that Southern accents can be defined by degree is paramount to

how YLSM girls situate themselves in relation to national and regional linguistic

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[15] My question in line 1, informed by my observations and experiences, presupposes that Southern identity is a gradient category. I found that asking about regional identity in this gradient way, as opposed to asking whether participants "were" or "were not" categorically Southern, allowed for a broad range of responses, both positive and negative, linguistic and otherwise.

standards rather than viewing accents as categorical facts. Admitting that she has little experience with accents outside of the region, Taylor then notes that she and her friend from Chicago perceive one another as having "really" regional accents, recognizing not only degrees of accents but also that perceptions of accents may vary depending on the listener's perspective, a fact that may be reflected not only in the comparison of Chicago and Southern accents, but also among various Southern accents as well.

In these ways, Southern accents are defined gradiently and relationally, both relative to non-Southerners, like someone from Chicago, as well as in relation to "too Southern" others. Classifying accents in terms of degree invokes an important intraregional distinction that YLSM members draw between desirable and undesirable versions of Southern identity based on the frequency and use of Southern linguistic forms. That is, it may be acceptable to display some regional characteristics, but displaying too many is not.

Similar comments that cast YLSM girls as not sounding "too Southern" occurred in other conversations as well, reflecting the prevalence of the ideology that linguistic identity is a gradient classification. In Example 4.4, Claire's Southern accent and her sartorial style are used as evidence of her classification as the "most Southern" girl present among the five YLSM members participating in a group interview.

Example 4.4 "My accent's not that thick"

1	Karen:	how she dresses kind of
2	Lauren:	she has a pretty Southern accent too
3	Karen:	yeah
4	Claire:	my accent's not that thick but
5	Karen:	ha ha
6	Claire:	[I love Lilly[16]]
7	Lauren:	[some things that like]
8		some things you [2 say are pretty 2]
9	Karen:	[2 I think Peyton's 2] a [3 pretty good accent 3]
10	Claire:	and [3 I wear a lot of seer 3] sucker
11		like girl seersucker not like
12		n- m- you know
13	Sara:	[I was guessing]
14	Claire:	[like Lilly seer]sucker

In this conversation, both Lauren and Claire talk about Claire's Southern accent as constructed by degree: Lauren labels Claire as having "a pretty Southern accent" (line 2), likely comparing her to the girls present, and Claire responds that she believes her accent is not "that thick" (line 4), likely compared to salient representations of Southern speakers. Lauren then repeats her description of Claire's linguistic identity with the further qualification that only "some things that [Claire says] are pretty [Southern]" (line 8), rather than characterizing all of Claire's language as "pretty Southern."[17] Interestingly, while Claire and Lauren may appear to disagree about how Southern Claire

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[16] A brand name: short for Lilly Pulitzer

[17] I recognize a few sources of potential ambiguity in this transcript. First, the word "pretty" in line 8 could function either as an adjective, a positive evaluation of "some things" Claire says, or as an adverb modifying "Southern." Given the repetition of "pretty" from line 2 where it was used in the phrase "pretty Southern" and the interruption of Lauren's turn by Karen (line 9), it is more likely that it was meant as a modifier for "Southern." A similar issue of ambiguity occurs in line 9 with Karen's description of Peyton's accent as "a pretty good" one. While the topic of Peyton's pretty good accent" was not picked up in this excerpt of the conversation, Karen's characterization of the accent seemed to be not an evaluation of its positive qualities but a judgment of prototypicality, more likely to be interpreted as "Peyton's a pretty good [example of an] accent."

sounds, they both work to minimize the degree to which Claire is understood to use Southern language forms.

While Claire indirectly rejects Lauren's characterization of her language as particularly Southern, she accepts that she may embody Southernness in other ways: she highlights non-linguistic practices, specifically wearing particular clothing styles, that also contribute to her Southern identity. That is, she brings up her material identification with the region instead. Claire's initial response to Lauren puts linguistic and sartorial practices in direct contrast ("my accent's not that thick but I love Lilly," lines 4-5) and cites the brand Lilly Pulitzer, with its resort wear and bright prints, often in pink and green, that marks the general category of upper-class preppy women (Birnbach 1980; Yazigi 1998), a category that is understood locally as specific to the South. Elaborating on her clothing style, Claire also claims to "wear a lot of seersucker, like girl seersucker… like Lilly [Pulitzer] seersucker" (lines 10-11, 14), highlighting, through her references to this Southern fabric and this preppy brand, her intersecting class, gender, and regional identities. This preppy identity goes beyond sartorial style, however, and evokes other practices such as the Southern charm and stances of politeness that are expected of preppy Southern women. In this description of clothing as more fundamental to Claire's regional identity than her linguistic practices, Claire implicitly juxtaposes her upper-class preppy Southern identity with the types of Southerners who have "thick" accents, often members of lower classes.

In addition to defining Southern accents by degree, YLSM girls created intraregional distinctions by specifically naming others as sounding more Southern and constructing themselves as less Southern by comparison. For example, claiming to only

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use Southern phonological forms in one particular context, Molly describes herself as only sounding Southern when she is upset, connecting her emotional speech with an undesirable type of redneck Southern identity.

Example 4.5 "I've been told that I sound like a redneck"

1	Sara:	how Southern do you think you are
2	Molly:	um
3		well it depends
4		I think I'm very like
5		Southern at heart
6		I- if you mean like sounding Southern?
7	Sara:	whatever
8	Molly:	only when I get like- when I talk fast
9		or get like really mad or
10		I've been told that I sound like a redneck
11		and people can't take me seriously when I'm mad at them ((laughing))
12	Sara:	((laughter))
13	Molly:	so but
14		like growing up I think I was
15		raised very Southern

In Example 4.5, Molly's response to my question about her Southernness appears to distinguish between a Southern essence, related to personal character and shaped by lived experiences, and Southern language use. Specifically, while she embraces her Southern essence ("I'm very like Southern at heart" and "was raised very Southern," lines 4-5, 14-15), she claims that her language does not always display her Southernness, emerging only during certain emotional states ("[I sound] Southern…only when I get like…really mad," lines 6-9). In claiming that she uses a Southern accent in restricted situations, Molly implicitly asserts that her normal speech is not marked by a regional accent. Further, by linking accented speech with others specifically labeled as "redneck" (line 10) she reproduces the language ideology that, even within her community in the

South, regional linguistic forms are seen as nonstandard, stigmatized, and should be avoided as only the purview of other Southerners.

In addition to linking accents with negative value by qualifying their own use of Southern phonological forms, these girls also devalued regional accents when they performed imitations of other types of Southerners, drawing on salient phonological forms to create caricatures for humorous effect (Mesthrie 2002; Chun 2004; Labrador 2004). In the following example, a group of YLSM members moves from discussing variations of Southern identity across different cities and towns in the area to talking specifically about "the really Southern cheerleaders" (lines 1-3) with whom they have interacted. By providing descriptions of these girls as rural, slightly dumb, and seemingly unaware of social norms, and by voicing them with marked Southern phonology, they link accented Southerners with negative qualities and distance themselves, and their own type of preppy Southern identity, from Southerners like them.

Example 4.6 "The really Southern cheerleaders"

```
1      Amanda:      wait where are the Horses from that yall play?
2                   or whatever
3                   the really Southern cheerleaders?
4      Lydia:       oh Westwood[18]
5      X:           °I don't know which
6      Sara:        [where is that]
7      Lydia:       [the hornets]
8      Claire:      yeah [2 Walkerville 2]
9      Lydia:          { "[2 we 2] are the Hornets" }
10     ALL:         ((laughter))
11     X:           wait where is=
12     Claire:      and [PVA]
13     Lydia:          [that's what they] talk like
14     Claire:      PVA
15                  Park Vendell
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[18] The high schools, mascots, and towns referenced here are pseudonyms.

16	All:	((laughter))	
17	Whitney:	[oh yeah]	
18	Lydia:	[oh my gosh]	
19		they're Southern too	
20	Claire:	{ "P V A" } ((clapping))	*A*: [ei] as lowered [ai]
21		{ ["Bulldogs"] } ((clapping))	
22	Lydia:	[and they're all like] ((mimics off beat clapping))	
23	All:	((laughter))	
24	Lydia:	they walked over to our side of the cheerleaders and were like	
25		{ "can you help me do my face paint" }	*my*: [mai] as glide-weakened [maĭ][19] *face*: [feis] as lowered [fais] *paint*: [pʰẽĩnt] as hyper-nasalized, lowered [pʰãĩnt]
26		I was like ((laughing))	
27		"can you not get one of your own cheerleaders to face paint you"	*face*: [feis], *paint*: [pẽĩnt]
28	All:	((laughter))	
29	Claire:	their half time two weeks ago was just great	
30		{ "P V A all the way" } ((off-beat clapping continuing after speech))	*A, way*: [ei] as lowered [ai]
31		((lots of laughter))	
32	Amanda:	oh my gosh	
33	Claire:	oh my god	
34	All:	((laughter))	
35	Claire:	°that's so funny	

In this conversation, the linguistic and social distinctions between preppy YLSM girls and small-town cheerleaders is indicated in multiple ways: in the context in which this topic arises, after listing towns and places that these girls see as more Southern than their own city; in the particular phonological variables that are manipulated when Lydia and Claire imitate their speech; and in the description provided of those cheerleaders' behavior. Lydia's voicing of cheerleaders from a small-town school in line 25 include [ai] glide-weakening ("my") and the lowering of [ei] to [ai] ("face paint"), both features of the Southern Vowel Shift (Labov 1994; Thomas 2004), one of which Claire also uses in

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[19] The symbol [aĭ] represents a diphthong with a weak, or shortened, offglide. For more on this variant, see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.

her imitation of a different set of small-town cheerleaders ([ei] to [ai] in "A" and "way," lines 20, 30).

In her short description of the cheerleaders at Westwood School, Lydia implicitly constructs them as not only linguistically marked but also socially inferior: she describes them as unintelligent and unaware of social norms, committing what Lydia sees as a social faux pas by imposing to ask a favor, and a personal one at that, of someone they do not know. Likewise, Claire's imitation of a cheer (line 25), with its simplicity and its off-beat clapping, also attributes a lack of intelligence and competence to the cheerleaders from PVA. The way that Claire and Lydia in Example 4.6 reject this particular type of rural Southern identity as phonologically marked and socially inept is similar to the way that Claire, in Example 4.4, claims her own unaccented brand of Southernness by aligning with preppy Southern identity and distancing herself from the linguistic stigma of lower-class Southerners. These girls, at various times, draw distinctions among types of Southern identities and acceptable linguistic behaviors along both class and rural lines.

During my fieldwork, I observed that while accents were fairly consistently constructed as negative and were usually invoked to assign negative value to individuals, there were exceptions to this tendency. For example, Julie, the YLSM member who thought of herself as less Southern than many of her peers, explained that she unintentionally mimicked the norms of Southern language that she saw as appropriate for talking to older Southerners. During an interview, Julie voiced herself using marked Southern phonology when talking to their advisor Ms. Jones, an older Southern woman, whom she perceived as having an accent, specifically voicing the phrase "hi [ha::], Ms. Jones," pronounced with an elongated and glide-weakened /ai/ vowel, perhaps

constructing a polite stance by accommodating to her audience (for more discussion of this instance, see Example 6.2). This case was an exception, however, given that most instances of phonologically marked voicings were in moments such as in Example 4.6 and in the next chapter in which the individuals to whom accents were attributed were constructed as rural and unrefined, for example caricaturing others, often specifically boys, who were perceived as embodying a redneck lifestyle.[20]

When YLSM members minimized the degree or the frequency of their use of a Southern accent, they reproduced the ideology that Southern language forms were a reason for prejudice, drawing on and reifying the indexical link between accent and negative stereotypes of Southerners. At the same time, these YLSM members deliberately distanced themselves from certain types of Southern identity, characterized by a regional accent and the associated social stigma, for example, as evidenced by Molly's use of the label "redneck" and Lydia's commentary and voicing of socially inept small-town cheerleaders. In contrast to the preppy type of Southerner that YLSM members saw themselves as, both phonologically unmarked as well as "charming," Southerners with accents were seen as "more Southern," rural, and socially inferior.

4.4. Saying "Yall": Sounding and acting Southern

This ideological distinction between the use and structure of Southern language, assigning positive value to Southern pragmatic acts but negative value to Southern linguistic forms, established a dichotomy between two ways of performing Southern

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[20] In addition to attributing Southern linguistic features and social identities to the boys that they imitate, when YLSM members voice male individuals more than female ones as sounding Southern, they may also be reproducing the ideology that female speakers are more standard than male speakers, situated on a national and local scale of standardness (Labov 1990).

identity. In this section, I address how this distinction between function and form also shaped the indexical value of Southern words depending on context: specifically, I focus on the word "yall." This second-person plural pronoun and address term was one of the few non-phonological forms that were cited as distinctly Southern, aside from the address terms "sir" and "ma'am" mentioned in Section 4.2. I show below that evaluations of "yall" were neither necessarily positive nor necessarily negative; rather, the value of "yall" depended on whether it was incorporated into a positive pragmatic act or pronounced with stigmatized phonology.

The frequency of occurrence of the lexical item "yall" in this particular social community reflected its prevalence among Southern populations generally (Tillery, Wikle & Bailey 2000). Claire remarked on the ubiquity of the term in the South multiple times and constructed "yall" as a hallmark of Southern identity, once stating that "everybody says yall." Yet the following example suggests that beyond region, Claire did not overtly associate the word with any other particular social traits or social values, simply constructing its use as a necessary feature of Southern identity, evidenced by the fact that without it, speakers cannot be truly Southern.

Example 4.7 "He doesn't say yall"

1	Claire:	there was this kid in our grade who came from Florida	*Florida*: with elided middle syllable and weakened flap as [flɑɹɾə]
2		and he	
3		or Florida	*Florida*: hyper-articulated as [flɑ ɹɪ də]
4		. . .	
5		but he is just so n-	
6		like he acts Northern	
7	Sara:	really	
8	Claire:	he like says like "leg"	*leg*: [lɛg] as tensed [leig]
9		and	
10		"don't"	*don't*: [doũnt] as fronted, with hyper-articulated /t/ release [dəũntʰ]

11		Rob
12	Lauren:	no he's not Southern at all
13	Claire:	and he makes fun of h-
14		he doesn't say yall

According to Claire, her classmate Rob is not a genuine Southerner because he "acts Northern," both socially and linguistically, despite coming from a state that is geographically Southern. Florida is often perceived as a distinctly non-Southern place, both within prevalent ideologies of place (e.g. Reed 2003) and within the YLSM community, as when Claire claims just before this excerpt that "even though Florida's in the South, it is not Southern."

Claire describes Rob's linguistic behavior as further evidence that he remains an outsider to their Southern community, citing two of his non-Southern pronunciations. First, he is described as pronouncing "leg" as [leig] (line 8), which is not only a non-Southern pronunciation but also a non-mainstream pronunciation.[21] Second, Claire ridicules his hyper-standard realization of "don't" as [də̃ũntʰ] (line 10) with a centralized vowel and hyper-articulated /t/ release, having earlier mentioned the difference between this and Claire's pronunciation of "don't" as unreleased [do͠ũnt̚]. She concludes with the declaration that "he doesn't say yall" (line 14), treating the term "yall" as a Southern shibboleth, indicating regional belonging yet not inherently imbued with any additional social meanings such as positive or negative valence within the region.

While Claire described "yall" simply as a neutral feature indicating Southern identity, other girls described "yall" as having positive indexical value specifically as a

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[21] While this vowel has been linguistically recognized as a feature of Pacific Northwest English (Wassink et al. 2009; Wassink & Riebold 2013; Freeman 2014), its specific geographical identification is not likely known by these adolescent sorority members in the South.

potential component of Southern pragmatic acts. In Example 4.1, presented above and

again below as Example 4.8, "yall" plays a central role when some of the more preppy

YLSM girls, Amanda and her friends, talk about embracing their "Southern charm" and

some of the pragmatic acts and stances, politeness and friendliness, that contribute to that

identity.

Example 4.8 "To have that Southern charm"

1	Lydia:	and we have good manners
2	Amanda:	to have that Southern charm
3	Whitney:	haha
4	Emily:	I think it's fun
5		you can just be like outgoing
6		and like
7		"hey yall"
8	Amanda:	"yall"
9	Lydia:	and cute
10	Amanda:	yeah
11	Emily:	and it's acceptable
12	Amanda:	like "yes ma'am no ma'am"

The phrase "hey yall" (line 7) is cited not only as a regional lexical item but also,

given its contextualization in these pragmatic acts, as one way that allows these YLSM

members to construct a preppy Southern persona, as "yall" (lines 7, 8) is used to

exemplify "good manners," "Southern charm," and being "outgoing" and "cute" (lines 1,

2, 5, and 9), which connects this word with the polite and friendly stances and acts

associated with the Southern hospitality and charm of preppy Southern women. Thus,

"yall" takes on positive value not because it is a structural feature of Southern language

but because it is used in positive pragmatics acts that are associated with preppy

Southerners.

In addition to the role of the pragmatic context in which "yall" is used, its phonological realization can also shape indexical meaning of this linguistic token. As Julie, the self-described "less Southern" YLSM member quoted in Example 4.2, explains below, her Australian cousins tease her for her Southern identity and specifically for saying "yall." Yet instead of contesting any regional stigma associated with using the word itself, Julie only contests the stigma of the non-standard pronunciation of the term that her cousins perceive.

Example 4.9 "I don't say it like that"

1	Julie:	I wouldn't have said I w- have a particularly Southern accent but	
2		when I go to	
3		like Australia	
4		they say "oh my"	
5		they're like mocking me	
6	Sara:	really?	
7	Julie:	I'll say "yall"	*yall*: Southern pronunciation [jaɫ]
8		like which is	
9		I say "yall"	*yall*: Southern pronunciation [jaɫ]
10		like "yall"	*yall*: Southern pronunciation [jaɫ]
11		not "yall"	*yall*: non-Southern pronunciation [jæɫ]
12		like "yall"	
13		and um like	
14		"yall" ((voicing her cousins))	*yall*: non-Southern pronunciation [jæɫ]
15		I'm like "no I don't say it like that"	

In this example, Julie recognizes the salience of the regional term "yall" in citing it as a reason for being mocked as sounding Southern. However, her explanation of contrasting pronunciations of "yall," alternating between the vowels [a] and [æ], illustrates that the social meaning and value of "yall" can shift depending on its phonological realization. In stating that she pronounces "yall" with its standard phonology only, regardless of the accuracy of her cousins' voicings, Julie implicitly

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asserts that it is Southern phonology that carries negative social value rather than lexical, morpho-syntactic, or pragmatic variation.

The structural variation that defines the South linguistically—phonologically, lexically, and morpho-syntactically—has been investigated since early linguistic interest in the region. Yet distinctive regional salience of each of these factors has shifted. Moving beyond the loss of many of the distinguishing features of the Southern lexicon over time (Johnson 1993), Bailey and Tillery (1996) have even suggested that "What distinguishes the linguistic South today is not its lexicon but its pronunciation and grammar" (310). This is not to say that lexical variation has become meaningless within the South. Certain Southern lexical features, including the address terms discussed above, continue to play an important role for Southern identity. Within the YLSM community, these lexical tokens, "ma'am," "sir," and "yall," functioned similarly to the use of address terms and greetings as emblematic markers of identity among ethnic groups (Poplack 1980; Fought 2003; Childs & Mallinson 2006), marking speakers as belonging to a particular regional identity but also further identifying speakers as enacting a particular preppy Southern identity.

Despite the prominence and positive value of these tokens of regional lexical variation, their social value could be tarnished by their combination with nonstandard phonology. That is, for YLSM members, tokens of lexical variation might have indicated regional belonging, but their precise social value—as positive or negative—only emerged from their pragmatic function or phonological form. The potential bivalence of a regional item like "yall" suggests that indexical meaning of regional forms derives not only from

prevalent ideologies of regional language but also from how linguistic forms come to be contextualized in interaction.

4.5. Discussion

In this chapter, I have illustrated the ideology held by YLSM members that bifurcated Southern identities and Southern language practices, allowing YLSM members to situate themselves, as well as specific linguistic features, relationally within a linguistically stigmatized region. On one hand, YLSM members claimed to embody positively valued ways of being Southern, such as being polite and having Southern charm, highlighting the pragmatic functions of Southern language in order to construct a proper and preppy upper-class feminine identity. On the other hand, they distanced themselves from the kinds of language practices that were linked with Southern phonology and with socially and linguistically ridiculed Southern identities, such as those of rural and unrefined Southerners. Constructing this dichotomy was one way for YLSM members to deflect the prejudice against Southern identity onto other Southerners, while defining their own identities as preppy Southern girls as exempt from this regional stigma.

In the first section, I examined metalinguistic commentary on the Southern language practices that YLSM members embraced as their own, specifically their use of Southern language to construct polite attitudes and friendly stances as demonstrations of "Southern charm" and "Southern hospitality," both local markers of a positively valued female preppy Southern identity. Second, I discussed how the form of Southern language presupposed and reinforced its stigma, as when YLSM members claimed to use regional accents only minimally and expressed their wishes to avoid sounding like they had much

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of a Southern accent. The use of regionally marked phonology when voicing "more Southern" others, such as small-town girls and rednecks (see Chapter 5), reproduced prejudice against these Southerners and Southern linguistic forms.

Finally, I showed that in addition to strategically linking pragmatic and phonological dimensions with their own speech and that of others and thus attributing different kinds of value to selves and others, YLSM members also used this same distinction to assign either positive or negative value to the second-person plural pronoun "yall." While this linguistic token carried regional social meaning, it was the accompanying linguistic form or linguistic function that imbued it with further value-laden social meaning, capable of indexing contrasting types of Southern identities. The multiple social meanings of "yall" illustrate the flexible nature of indexical meaning, influenced by structural, pragmatic, and cultural context, resulting in emergent meanings based on phonological realization, embedding in speech acts, and attitudes circulating in the YLSM community. Although Southern phonology was ideologically linked with negative perceptions of Southerners, such as their linguistic incorrectness, rurality, and lack of social refinement, the cultural functions of Southern language, specifically for enacting stances of politeness, friendliness, and "Southern charm," were valued positively and embraced as part of YLSM members' own type of Southern identity.

Chapter 5. Sounding Like a Southern Boy: The Intersection of Region, Language, Gender, and Class

Among the widely circulating images of the U.S. South, some of the most common portray white Southerners as poor, rural, and backwards-thinking men with strong Southern accents (Langman & Ebner 2001; Von Doviak 2005; Slade & Narro 2012; Eskridge 2013). This prominent redneck stereotype of white Southerners shapes and perpetuates linguistic prejudice towards speakers in the American South (Reed 1986; Lippi-Green 2012), and Southerners are well aware of this fact. Faced with well-known negative stereotypes of Southern identity, they find ways to reconcile linguistic prejudice with the value of their own regional pride.

This chapter examines how YLSM members, as upper-class white Southern girls, addressed this tension in the context of discussing two boys they described as the "most Southern" in their upper-class social network, Dave Clarke and Russell Whitson.[22] As noted in earlier chapters, these girls generally embraced and took pride in being Southern, yet they were acutely aware of the negative associations that accompanied their regional identity and particularly the use of Southern language. In this context of multivalent Southern identity, my close analysis of several conversational moments explores two ways that YLSM members complicated dominant models of Southern masculinity

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[22] While I refer to YLSM members typically only by a first name, I refer to these boys with both first and last names (both pseudonyms) in order to highlight the ways YLSM members talk about them in this chapter: Dave is linked explicitly with his sister Liza Clarke in Example 5.1 and the girls in Example 5.4 refer to Russell and his twin brother as the Whitson twins.

through their mocking performances and characterizations of Dave and Russell. First, in describing Dave as embodying a redneck identity, they reproduced a working-class model of white Southern masculinity and framed Southern lower-class qualities as generally unappealing to girls yet potentially desirable for upper-class boys. Second, they recognized a complementary local category of upper-class, white Southern masculinity in their talk about Russell as a preppy Southern boy. In both of these cases, YLSM members responded to and complicated hegemonic ideologies of Southern language and identity.

5.1. Stereotypes of white Southerners

The stereotypes of white Southerners that circulate in popular culture and imagination (Kirby 1986; McPherson 2003; Cox 2011) characterize Southern identity as fixed within the South and tied to the past, evoking a sense of nostalgia that is potentially problematic (cf. Hill 2008:113–114). These perceptions of Southerners are based in models of personhood that can be understood as chronotopes,[23] that is, identities linked to moments in "time-space" (Bakhtin 1981). Such stereotypes have ranged from Southerners as "savagely racist, intellectually stunted, [and] emotionally deranged," as described in W. J. Cash's (1941) *The Mind of the South* (Cobb 2005:1), to the genteel aristocracy and complacent working and slave classes portrayed in the "moonlight and

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[23] Appropriating Bakhtin's (1981) notion of chronotopes as a way to understand the boundedness of literary characters within time and place, linguistic anthropologists have also explored how figures of identity, such as social types, are similarly bound within the same confines. For example, Agha (2007b) draws heavily on this concept with his model of "cultural chronotopes" as "depictions of place-time-and-personhood" (320), and numerous other scholars have embraced this concept in their analyses of various social types bounded within particular cultures (see, for example, the special issue edited by Lempert & Perrino 2007; as well as Dick 2010; Koven 2013; Woolard 2013; Divita 2014).

magnolias" myth of the idyllic Old South, each in turn perpetuating the social structures of the past South, particularly conservative class and gender hierarchies.

A relatively strict two-class distinction characterizes widely held perceptions of contemporary white Southern identity. According to sociologist and Southern studies scholar John Shelton Reed (1986), the two-class model may have never accurately described the South, but its legacy persists nonetheless: "white Southern social types can be subsumed in a simple, two-class model, reflecting the view from the top: us or them, genteel or common, upper or lower class" (23). At one end of this binary are the social types derived from the aristocracy of the Old South, including the Southern "gentleman" and "belle." At the other end are social types associated with the lower classes, including "redneck" and "hillbilly" male types as well as a lower class female counterpart, the "good old girl." Meanwhile, the lack of popular attention to the middle ground, specifically, the models of middle-class Southern identities, seems to perpetuate this oversimplified binary distinction that has defined the region, just as stereotypes of Southerners perpetuate images of oversimplified race and gender binaries.

Scholars of literature, history, and media studies have examined these white Southern types primarily along lines of both socioeconomic class and gender, finding that male and female social types are positioned within this class continuum in different ways. Stereotypical images of white male Southerners range from the "good old country boy" to the mean-spirited "redneck" to the aristocratic "gentleman," with nuanced variations among these types (Reed 1986). While the Southern redneck is seen as lower-class, he is also generally thought of as rural, ignorant, racist, and mean-spirited. In contrast, the Southern "gentleman," as a relic of the Southern upper class, is defined among whites by

his personal character as refined, strong-willed, and well-intentioned. Reed (1986) asserts that "[t]he social typology for white males is not only simple, it is *stable*" (22), arguing that the social structures of the past continue to be the basis for the popular understanding of male Southern types along with differences in intelligence and character.

Compared to these models of white male Southern identity, stereotypes of white female Southerners seem somewhat less well-defined and potentially less stable over time; however, they, too, reflect past social structures, gender hierarchies, and gender roles. The most prevalent female stereotype is the Southern "lady," along with its typically younger variant, the Southern "belle" (Reed 1986:48). Both are female counterparts to the Southern "gentleman" and are often seen by whites as submissive to men yet surreptitiously wielding power over them (Abbott 1983). Other stereotypes of white Southern women exist, including the female counterparts to lower-class male types such as the "good old boy," the "redneck," and the "hillbilly," although these female types have only become increasingly recognized in recent years.[24] In general, female types have been less visible than male types in popular consciousness and media, with the exception of the Southern "belle;" this difference illustrates the traditional prominence of men in Southern culture and reflects widely held mainstream ideologies that link lower-class identity and masculinity (French 1981; Smith 1985; Cox 2011; Slade, Givens-Carroll & Narro 2012).

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[24] For example, while the prototypical figure of the redneck is male within both local YLSM discourses and widely circulating U.S. discourses, the figure of the "redneck woman" has been reappropriated and glorified, most prominently by country singer Gretchen Wilson (Hubbs 2011). Her anthem "Redneck Woman," which comments on gender and class roles, topped the Billboard country music charts in 2004 (Billboard 2014).

Defining social types along only a few lines, such as class and gender, stereotypes become powerful ideological constructs used to classify the social world according to manageable distinctions (Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron 1994; Stangor 1995). The attention that Southern social types receive in popular media (e.g., King 1976; Foxworthy 1993; Blount, Jr. 2009; Glock 2011) reproduces discourses that continue to pigeonhole Southerners, particularly among humorists who often elaborate on, yet reify, the existing stereotypes of Southern identities such as "Southern ladies" and "rednecks."[25] However, scholars in various academic fields, such as history, literature, and media, have brought attention to Southern stereotypes as incomplete portrayals of the heterogeneity of Southern life. For example, researchers have explored masculinity in the South, looking beyond simplistic representations of men in connection with race, class, and sexuality (e.g., Reed 1986; Richardson 2007; Watts 2008; Friend 2009). Likewise, the circulating images of white Southern women have been critiqued as well, including perceptions of the helpless belle or the independent lower-class woman both historically and in the so-called "New South" (Dillman 1988; Bernhard et al. 1992; Coryell 2000; Wells & Phipps 2010; Glock 2011). Such academic examinations have sought to complicate these depictions of Southern characters by focusing on social types who do not clearly fit into the previously existing typology of Southerners.

5.2. Stereotypes in interaction

Much of the previously discussed research on stereotypes has viewed stereotypes as detrimental, necessarily reproducing negative perceptions of social groups and

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[25] For example, the titles of the humorous book *Southern Ladies and Gentlemen* (King 1976) and standup comedy routine "You Might Be a Redneck If" (Foxworthy 1993) explicitly label the stereotypes they comment on, yet their commentary on these stereotypes often serves to recirculate the same stigmatized type.

stripping individuals of their ability to understand the nuances of a complex world. While some sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have shared this interest in critiquing problematic stereotypes (e.g., Bucholtz & Lopez 2011; Hill 2008), others have acknowledged that stereotypes, embedded in our language ideologies, are an integral component of sociolinguistic processes. This research has thus examined the mechanisms by which social and linguistic characteristics are linked with recognizable social types in conversation.

Some stereotypes are often the subject of commentary, circulating at a high level of metalinguistic awareness, as is the case in Labov's (1972b:178–180) usage of the term "stereotype." Yet while Labov treats stereotypes as a class of linguistic features, distinct from "markers" and "indicators," which operate at lower levels of awareness, I use the term "stereotype" to refer to ideological models about a social group that may, but need not always, include reference to the group's language practices. Beliefs about the social and linguistic characteristics of a group may be fundamental in individuals' linguistic practices regardless of whether individuals are explicitly aware of those beliefs. For example, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) articulate the role of stereotypes in the construction of linguistic identities in language contact settings, arguing that "linguistic performance—what people actually say—is related ... to the stereotypes and abstractions and idealized models which both linguists and non-linguists have about 'languages' and about 'speech or language communities'" (247). Agha (1998) makes a similar argument, approaching language variation from a cultural-historical perspective: stereotypes may serve "as models for some individuals, counter-models for others" (152), allowing for

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individuals to deliberately construct their linguistic identities in response to circulating stereotypes and discourses about those stereotypes.

Scholars such as Keane (2003) have pointed out that identities exist at the intersections of multiple social dimensions (cf. Crenshaw 1989), including race, gender, class, and sexuality. As such, linguistic variables are unlikely to index only a single dimension of identity but rather are likely to evoke multiple components of an identity at once. For example, Agha (2007a) has labeled the widely recognized social types with which language varieties become associated as "characterological figures of personhood," based on his analysis of the type of person with whom the British English variety of RP (Received Pronunciation) is linked, defined by class and education as well as intellectual and aesthetic attributes simultaneously (Agha 2003). Perceptual linguistic research supports this idea as well, revealing that linguistic practices can bring to mind a collection of social factors about a speaker, including region, gender, and ethnicity, as well as personal characteristics such as friendliness, snobbiness, and intellectual ability (e.g., Niedzielski & Preston 2003; Preston & Robinson 2008; Campbell-Kibler 2009). This focus on stereotypes and their linguistic representations recognizes that language is ideologically connected to conceptions of holistic social types rather than single dimension social traits or identities.

In addition to the relationship between language use and the social identities that language use evokes, sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological studies have also addressed the nuanced ways that stereotypes, their labels, and discourses about them are mapped from societal to interactional levels (Hewstone & Giles 1997; van Langenhove & Harré 1994; Chun 2004; Reyes 2004; Reyes 2012). For example, linguists have examined

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the use of stereotypes themselves as interactional resources, allowing individuals to construct identities by aligning and distancing from widely circulating stereotypes (Bucholtz 2004) and to use racial labels as indirect commentary on gender identities (Chun 2011). At these interactional levels, stereotypes can be used in flexible ways that call into question the relationship between various presupposed dimensions of identity, just as the meanings of stereotypes may be challenged at community and societal levels as well.

The specific values and effects of stereotypes depend on their particular situatedness within local contexts, for example, as individuals link widely circulating stereotypes to relevant local typifications of them (Reyes 2004). For example, Johnstone (1999) investigates Southern language practices from a rhetorical and stylistic perspective, exploring the varying ways that "Southern-sounding speech" is used intentionally because of its ability to evoke particular Southern identities in interactions. Johnstone argues that, for female speakers, the language variety of the South is itself linked with personal traits such as the ladylike reservation and feminine wiles of the regionally situated Southern "belle" social type. Similarly, Hall-Lew and Stephens (2012) show that the social meaning of using "country talk"—made up of certain features of Southern language—can vary depending on the local community, as in Texoma, Texas, where "country" identities may be defined in opposition simultaneously to city dwellers, hicks, and rednecks. In these and other ways, residents of the South employ stereotypes of Southern identities and language practices, categorizing their lived experiences according to multiple dimensions of identity, both directly and indirectly constructing local instantiations of regional social types.

5.3. Redneck or preppy: Local ideologies of Southern masculinity

In the following analysis, I show how YLSM members' understanding of their regional identity was shaped by their race, class, and gender positioning as white upper-class girls in a Southern city. Specifically, they oriented to local images of white Southernness that closely reflected their lived experiences, describing themselves and some of their male peers as embodying a preppy white Southern identity. Southern boys were seen as constructing their preppy identities both by engaging in practices of material consumption that were classed and raced in particular ways and by engaging in heteronormative relationship practices, including dating girls and playing the part of a Southern gentleman.

YLSM members positioned preppy Southerners in opposition to other prevailing models of Southern identity, specifically the white, lower-class, and rural "redneck." Within the YLSM community, the term "redneck" was used exclusively in reference to male peers, although it could apply to members of the same economic class and social circles (that is, not lower-class and, for the most part, not rural). Widely represented in the media, for example, in various iconic films, such as *Heat of the Night*, *Easy Rider*, and *Deliverance*, the popular redneck stereotype calls to mind a lower-class Southern-accented man with a particular outlook on life informed by his personality as a lazy, ignorant, bigoted, gun-loving, and mean-spirited individual (e.g. Reed 1986; Hartigan 2003). However, the way these high school sorority members used the term reflected the partial reappropriation of the label that began in the 1970s (Huber 1995; Shirley 2010), to a certain extent recasting the negative type as positively valued for its realness and unpretentious lifestyle. And while not all individuals who self-identify as rednecks are white (Childs & Mallinson 2006), whiteness is generally assumed of redneck identity,

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particularly within the YLSM community in which the label referred to only white Southerners. In addition to whiteness, when sorority members referred to their male classmates as "redneck," they typically indicated hyper-masculinity, an exaggerated Southern accent, and rural practices such as hunting and fishing, wearing camouflage, and driving trucks.

5.4. Redefining redneck Southern masculinity

Members of YLSM sometimes appropriated the widely circulating image of the lower-class Southern redneck as a relevant figure in their social networks, for example, to characterize an upper-class individual in their own social circle, Dave Clarke. Dave was closely connected to the YLSM social scene: not only was his sister Liza a member of YLSM, but he was also a classmate and friend of many other YLSM members, having grown up in the same city and attending the same small private school.

During my three years of fieldwork with girls in YLSM, Dave was mentioned on multiple occasions, each time accompanied by a reference to his redneck type of Southernness, namely his accent or his fondness for hunting. In one of these moments, Claire, a friend of Dave and Liza, provided further insight into Dave's Southern masculinity by reading aloud a texted exchange between him and another male friend, which Dave had shared with her. When Dave's friend chose to hang out with Claire instead of go hunting, Dave responded, "Never let a girl get in the way of hunting." While his reply was likely playful, he closely aligned himself with a version of masculinity that privileged lower-class Southern activities and hunting with exclusively male company over heterosexual activities such as spending time with girls.

The next two examples illustrate how YLSM members talked about Dave as epitomizing redneck Southern identity. In describing Dave in this way, YLSM members, including his sister Liza, reproduced the redneck stereotype, in terms of its gendered, classed, regional, and linguistic dimensions, but they allowed for variability in terms of the prejudice that typically accompanies this type. In Example 5.1, Julie and Charlotte, Dave's classmates and Liza's friends, move from discussing various accents to Julie's proposed topic of "someone that we know that's really Southern," leading them to poke fun at Dave's particular Southern redneck persona.

Example 5.1 "Where did that even come from"

1	Julie:	he he
2		Liza Clarke's sister
3		she- she- brother um
4		she went to Fairmont-
5		graduated from Fairmont last year
6		but
7		he ha- like f-
8		Liza doesn't have that accent
9		but Dave does
10		[and it's]
11	Charlotte:	[oh god]
12	Julie:	it's:
13		where are you from
14		[like]
15	Charlotte:	[yeah]
16	Julie:	where did that [even come] from ((laughing))
17	Charlotte:	[yeah]
18	Julie:	um
19		off the { ↑bayou river }

bayou: [baiju] as glide-weakened [baːĭju]
river: [ɹɪvəɹ] as final non-rhotic [ɹɪvə]

20		[like oh] my
21	Charlotte:	[yeah]
22	Julie:	haha cut- cut out of a -

23	Charlotte:	{ "bout to go shoot a couple deer out in the back woods" } ((slow tempo))	*(a)bout*: unstressed syllable elided as "bout" *couple (of) deer*: unstressed syllable elided as "couple deer" *deer*: [diɹ] with vowel breaking and lowering as [de.əɹ] ((slow tempo))
24	Julie:	like { "Julie" } ((as if calling her name))	
25		hm.	
26	Charlotte:	yeah	
27		sorry?	
28	Charlotte:	{ "with my with my twelve gauge rifle "} ((slow tempo))	*my*: [mai] as glide-weakened [maĭ] *rifle*: [ɹaifl] as glide-weakened [ɹaĭfl] ((slow tempo))
29	Julie:	((laughter))	
30		yeah	

In this conversation, Julie and Charlotte, who often resisted self-identifying as Southern, construct Dave as a redneck through both overt commentary and an imitation of his accent. After Julie describes Dave as having a strong Southern accent in contrast to his sister, both girls mock his accent and his deer hunting.[26] Voicing Dave in lines 23 and 28, Charlotte specifically mentions hunting practices associated with redneck identity and mimics him by exaggerating a number of stereotypically Southern linguistic resources, such as glide-weakened /ai/ in "my" and "rifle" (line 28) as well as a slower speech rate and elided syllables[27] ("[a]bout" and "a couple [of] deer" in line 23).

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[26] Charlotte reveals herself to be only partially familiar with hunting practices when she is voicing Dave, given that she cites a "twelve gauge rifle" as a deer-hunting gun. While rifles are the most common weapon used to hunt deer, a "twelve gauge" is actually a type of shotgun rather than a rifle.

[27] While the phrase "a couple deer" may seem unmarked here, the fact that this shortened form (compared to "a couple of deer") is used in combination with other nonstandard features highlights the prevalence of nonstandard linguistic features associated with Dave.

One of the questions that this mockery of Dave raises is whether these girls reproduce the negative value of redneck Southern identity when they attribute it to a member of their own social network. On one hand, it is clear that the girls bemoan Dave's linguistic identity as out of place given Dave's upper-class upbringing in a city ("where are you from" line 13, "where did that even come from" line 16, "off the bayou-river" line 19). In continuing to disparage redneck Southernness as very different from their own, these girls recirculate a stigmatized model of lower-class Southern masculinity. On the other hand, as the following excerpt further illustrates, Dave's insider status, as Liza's brother and a close member of the YLSM social network, seems to mitigate some of the widely recognized stigma associated with rednecks and their language.

In Example 5.2, Liza and her friends describe Dave as an overly Southern male, yet their attitudes toward his redneck identity remain playful rather than disparaging. After Liza and Claire mimic Southern phrases, Liza mentions her brother specifically as "the most Southern person I've ever met," explaining this characterization by citing Dave's redneck outlook on life, exemplified by patriotism and aggression, and, again, his love of hunting.

Example 5.2 "He is like the most Southern person I've ever met"

1	Claire:	what are like some sayings that people say	
2		like "hey yall:" and	*yall*: Southern address term
3	Liza:	oh definitely "yall"	*yall*: Southern address term
4	Claire:	{ "gone fishin" }	*fishing*: [fɪʃɪŋ] with nasal fronting as [fɪʃɪn]
5	Sara:	((laughter))	
6	Claire:	((laughter))	
7	Liza:	{ "hey bo" }	*bo*: Southern male address term

| 8 | Claire: | { "them stink bugs" } ((laughing)) | *them*: demonstrative adjective |
| | | | *stink*: [stɪnk] lowered as [stænk] |

9	Liza:	yeah my brother?
10		you should interview him
11		he is like the most Southern person I've ever met
12	Sara:	really?
13	Liza:	yeah
14	Sara:	how old is he?
15	Liza:	he is
16	Sara:	is he older or younger
17	Liza:	no he's in ninth grade
18	Liza:	everybody calls [my dad's] ###
19	Claire:	[tenth grade] ((laughing))
20	Lauren:	tenth grade
21	Claire:	he's in tenth grade ((laughing))
22	Sara:	((laughter))
23	Liza:	yeah all my dad's
24	Sara:	what
25	Liza:	they call him um
26		Mr. Am*er*ica
27		cause he's so like
28		Am*er*ican
29	Sara:	oh wow
30	Liza:	and they're-
31		like all my guy friends are scared of him
32		cause he's like the typical
33		like
34		"I've got a *gun:*"
35		"I'm going to kill you"
36	Sara:	does he have a gun
37	Liza:	o:h yeah
38		he's like a hu:ge hunter
		((laughter))

In this moment, Liza's description of Dave constructs him as a token of the redneck type of lower-class Southern masculinity, an extremely Southern male with a salient accent and particular personality traits and attitudes. As in Example 5.1, linguistic identity is one way that Dave is characterized as extremely Southern, such as in the stereotypically Southern phrases that initially lead to the topic of Dave as well as the fact

that Liza points him out to me, the researcher, as someone of interest linguistically.[28] In

voicing Southern "sayings" (lines 2-8), Claire and Liza rely on numerous Southern

linguistic resources, including the lexical items "yall," a second-person plural pronoun,

and "bo," an address term typically used only between lower-class men in the rural

South. Claire also exaggerates nasal fronting in the phrase "gone fishin" (line 4), and, in

line 8, uses multiple features associated with rural white Southerners in particular:

demonstrative "them" (Cukor-Avila 2003; Schneider 2003) and the lowering of [ɪ] to [æ]

in "stink" (Thomas 2004:316).

While in Example 5.1 Julie and Charlotte judge and mock Dave explicitly for his

regional linguistic markedness, Liza and her friends refrain from overt criticism of

Dave's regional identity, instead keeping their description of him lighthearted, for

example by laughing throughout their conversation about Dave's extreme Southern

masculinity, such as in Claire's imitation of "them stink bugs," voiced quietly but with

laughter (line 8), which shifts the conversation specifically to Dave.[29] In addition, Liza

describes Dave's worldview and personality, including Dave's extremely nationalistic

views (as "Mr. America," lines 26, 28), his aggressive temperament ("my guy friends are

scared of him," line 31, "I'm going to kill you," line 35), and his fondness for guns and

hunting ("he's like a huge hunter," lines 35-38). These features collectively align him

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[28] In this moment, the influence of the researcher on the topic of conversation is clear
(Briggs 1986). Liza references my role as an outsider to the group and my interest in
talking to Southern speakers. It is important to realize that the topic of Dave is at least
partially a result of the researcher's presence; however, the conversation still
authentically represents how these girls describe peers like Dave to people they see as
peripheral to the community.
[29] The phrase "stink bugs" is voiced multiple times throughout this hour-long group
interview. Over the course of the interaction as a whole, it becomes clear that "stink
bugs" shifts the conversation from general Southern topics to Dave Clarke in particular,
reflecting that in some way this phrase is strongly associated with Dave.

closely with the lower-class redneck model of Southern masculinity, but Liza and Claire do not overtly ridicule Dave for them as Julie and Charlotte likely would have, given their commentary on his linguistic identity.

As these examples show, these girls' discussions of Dave Clarke reproduced widely circulating links between the stigmas of language, region, gender, and class. Yet their use of this stereotype to characterize an upper-class peer illustrates a difference from mainstream perceptions in the degree to which redneck identity is tolerated. First, some of these girls, Liza in particular, softened the stigma of redneck Southern identity, treating it humorously rather than critically. They were, thus, about to talk about Dave, an intimate member of their own social network, as an example of redneck identity. That is, Dave's embodiment of a hyper-Southern redneck identity did not seem to be as unfavorable locally as might be expected by community outsiders; specifically, these girls' association with a redneck peer did not necessarily tarnish their own reputations as preppy Southern girls.

Second, these girls presupposed and perpetuated class boundaries and stereotypes by talking about an upper-class individual like Dave who willingly chose to embrace a lower-class identity from his privileged position. His alignment with lower-class Southernness recalls Johnstone's (2003) observation that "Some students in Texas high schools and universities adopt southern-sounding ways of talking (together with other markers of ruralness such as stylized cowboy dress, country music and dancing, and pick-up trucks) to express their allegiance to traditional 'small-town' values, whether or not they actually come from small towns" (Johnstone 2003:202). To YLSM members,

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Dave's adoption of redneck linguistic and social practices expressed his fondness for a valued way of life that did not necessarily conflict with his upper-class lived experiences.

5.5. Defining preppy Southern masculinity

In addition to their lighthearted description of Dave as a redneck, YLSM girls also complicated hegemonic images of Southern masculinity by depicting an alternative way for upper-class boys to embody Southern identity. Specifically, the girls described their friend Russell Whitson according to a local model of upper-class preppy Southern masculinity.

Russell was intimately connected to the YLSM social circle, both as one of two twins known as friendly, attractive boys, and particularly as the long-term boyfriend of an YLSM member, Peyton. The Whitson twins were also known to orient to a specifically upper-class lifestyle, more likely to spend their weekends at the country club pool than hunting or fishing. In Example 5.3, Peyton, with help from Liza and Claire, characterizes Russell as a preppy Southern boy. Just before the following excerpt, the girls described the locally circulating social type of preppy Southern masculinity based primarily on material style and clothing. In Example 5.3, joking about how Russell takes so much care in dressing preppy that he becomes "a girl" about it, Peyton and her friends construct this model of upper-class Southern masculinity even while they playfully suggest its femininity.

Example 5.3 "My boyfriend is a girl"

1	Peyton:	my boyfriend is a girl
2		[1 like literally 1]
3	Liza:	[1 he takes- 1]
4		[2 he takes longer 2] to get ready
5	Sara:	[2 what- what does that mean 2]

6	Liza:	than [3 it takes her 3]
7	Peyton:	[3 no like I'm not 3] i-
8		h- it takes him longer to get ready
9		than it takes me to get ready=
10	Liza:	I'm not even kidding like=
11	Claire:	((laughter))
12	Peyton:	I went
13		we went to Newport
14		over the summer
15		and he went to Vance's[30]
16		[do you know what that is]
17	Liza:	[oh my gosh I bet] he:
18	Peyton:	and he a- [2 literally 2] spent a thousand dollars
19	Liza:	[2 cried 2]
20	Sara:	°oh my god
21	Peyton:	yeah
22	Claire:	((laughter))
23	Peyton:	he- he- he has a twin
24		and they're ##
25		[they're- they're-]
26	Sara:	[are they both like] that
27	Peyton:	[2 yes 2]
28	Liza:	[2 mhm 2] [3 mhm 3]
29	Peyton:	[3 like 3] they
30		like half their fights
31		are like
32		"oh my god that's my shirt [and it's in your closet]"
33	Liza:	"[you wore that blue shirt yesterday]"
34	Peyton:	yeah
35	Claire:	((laughter))
36	Peyton:	[like] I'm not even kidding
37	Sara:	[wow]
38		maybe they need their own clothes
39	Peyton:	yeah
40		they do
41	Sara:	but he dresses really Southern?
42	Peyton:	I think so
43		[do yall] think so
44	Liza:	[yeah like] [2 I don't know very many 2]
45	Claire:	[2 oh yeah2]
46	Karen:	[2 I think so definitely 2]
47	Liza:	I don't know very many guys who wear like
48		cargo shorts
49	Karen:	hm mh

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[30] An expensive men's clothing store

Peyton and Liza's description of Russell in this example depends on insider knowledge of the locally circulating model of a "preppy Southerner" with its classed and gendered characteristics. Peyton alludes to Russell's economic privilege when she references the fact that, while on vacation, he shopped at Vance's (line 15), an expensive and long-established men's clothier, and when she explicitly claims that he spent "literally […] a thousand dollars" there (line 18), though whether this claim is literal or figurative remains ambiguous. Drawing on an ideology that feminizes upper-class identity, Peyton jokes about the incongruity of Russell being both her "boyfriend" and "a girl" (line 1), citing that Russell spends excessive amounts of time getting ready (lines 8-9), enjoys shopping and spending large sums of money (lines 15-18), and fights over clothes (lines 29-33). Peyton's joking stance underscores the assumption that these feminine behaviors are not expected of someone she introduces as her boyfriend, yet these are the traits that also categorize Russell as an example of upper-class preppy Southern masculinity.

The girls in Example 5.3 construct Russell as Southern by describing him as preppy and upper-class, not by mocking him for his linguistic identity as they do for Dave. Even when mimicking Russell (lines 32-33), Peyton and Liza use no Southern linguistic features that are not already features of their regular speech styles in other moments. Instead, they voice a childish or girlish attitude toward sharing and bickering over clothing. While for these YLSM girls, Dave embodies one version of Southern masculinity, in part, by virtue of his Southern accent, Russell embodies another despite his lack of a Southern accent and primarily by virtue of his sartorial style.

The ways that YLSM girls orient to Russell as the epitome of locally defined preppy Southern identity highlights the social value, specifically in romantic attractiveness, of this type of upper-class Southern masculinity. In Example 5.4, drawn from a conversation recorded a week after Example 5.3, Claire, who was present for both, brings up the topic of Russell Whitson when the conversation turned to boyfriends and dating. Claire and the other girls describe Russell and his twin brother according to a model of preppy Southern masculinity, valuing an idealized heterosexual masculinity in spite of any "girl"-iness that comes with epitomizing preppy Southernness.

Example 5.4 "He's the preppiest of the preppy"

1	Claire:	everyone always talks about the Whitsons being the (perfect) guys=
2	Whitney:	oh my god
3	Amanda:	[they are]
4	Claire:	[they really]
5	Amanda:	[2 they're like the def- 2]
6	Whitney:	[2 they really are though 2]
7	Amanda:	they're
8	Claire:	they're like the definition of like
9		everyone wants
10		like [everyone wants a Whitson]
11	Whitney:	[the perfect guy]
12	Claire:	they're just so nice
13	Lydia:	[they are]
14	Whitney:	[I know]
15	Amanda:	[and so] [2cute 2]
16	Whitney:	[2 screw Peyton Smith 2]
17	Claire:	[2 I like they don't hurt girls 2]
18		[3 at all 3]
19	Whitney:	[3 god 3] she's so lucky
20	Amanda:	yeah she is ((laughing)
21	Lydia:	[she is lucky]
22	Emily:	[I just] see them as friendly
23		I don't . [2 see them 2]
24	Lydia:	[2 oh Emily 2]
25	Sara:	who are you talking about?
26	Amanda:	the Whitsons
27	Emily:	[two twin guys]
28	Whitney:	[do you know Peyton Smith?]

29	Sara:	yes
30	Whitney:	[her boyfriend]
31	Claire:	[Peyton and Russell] are too cute ((laughter))
32	Amanda:	[2 they're twins 2]
33	Whitney:	[2 is one of those twins 2]
34	Sara:	right
35	Claire:	last week,
36		last week Peyton was like
37		ca- she was talking cause she did this thing too
38	Sara:	[yeah]
39	Claire:	[and she] was talking about Russell
40		and she goes
41		"yeah my boyfriend"
42		"probably takes longer to get ready than I do"
43	Amanda, X:	((laughter))
44	Claire:	"he's the preppiest of the preppy"
45	Amanda:	that's really funny ((laughing))
46	Whitney:	it might be true though
47	Amanda:	probably

Initially focused on the desirability of dating "a Whitson" (line 10), Russell or his brother, this conversation develops into a commentary on their particular type of upper-class Southern masculinity. According to these girls, Southern boys do not need to enact lower-class masculinity to embody Southernness: the preppy model of upper-class masculinity allows girls to find a wider range of gendered practices acceptable, including those typically perceived as less masculine, verging on feminine, such as dressing well (Example 5.3) and being respectful towards women (lines 17-18).

In this description of Russell as the epitome of a preppy Southern boy, as in Example 5.3, these YLSM members' comments underline the intersecting nature of regional, gendered, and classed identities. That is, for Russell, as for Dave, Southern identity must be understood in the context of both masculinity and class status. Describing Russell, these girls construct a highly valued model of Southern identity, creating a link between "the preppiest of the preppy" (Example 5.4, line 44) and the social value of a heterosexualized ideal, as in the girls' descriptions of Russell and his

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brother as "the perfect guys" (lines 1, 11) and "the definition" (lines 5, 8) of what "everyone wants" (lines 9, 10). In finding it funny that Peyton points out Russell's occasional femininity (lines 41-47), these girls recognize the apparent contradiction between the value placed on the heterosexual attractiveness of this type and the potential femininity of preppy upper-class masculinity. This humorous response indicates that YLSM members do not challenge the fact that certain practices are clearly gendered; instead, Russell's heterosexual masculinity and his socioeconomic privilege seem to excuse his potential "girl"-iness. As a result, both Peyton and Claire are able to mock Russell for his "girl"-y tendencies without actually undermining his masculinity as a heterosexual Southern male.

By constructing Russell Whitson as an example of this highly valued model of upper-class masculinity, these girls countered the linguistic markedness and social stigma of the more common and nationally pervasive model of Southern masculinity, which is, like redneck identity, lower-class. Talking about Russell, YLSM girls described a locally defined category that provided upper-class individuals with a way to epitomize Southern identity without sacrificing heterosexual desirability and standard linguistic identities, that is, a way to be Southern while avoiding social and linguistic stigmas. YLSM members aligned closely with this model of preppy Southern masculinity by highlighting the social value that they placed on preppy identity, for example in their effusive praise for the Whitsons. In doing so, they reproduced a model of Southern identity that was distinct from the redneck in its gendered and classed practices, language, and social value, yet was nonetheless seen as a way to exemplify Southern masculinity.

5.6. Discussion

In this chapter I have shown how two contrasting regional stereotypes, or models of social identity, became important social resources for constructing identities and making distinctions within a local community. The ways that these YLSM members engaged with the often-assumed social class and gendered identity of Southern masculinity illustrates how they complicated and contested the intersection of regional, gendered, classed, and linguistic dimensions. Instead of examining stereotypes as identities based on a singular social dimension, this analysis necessitates an understanding of social types at the intersection of numerous social axes (cf. Crenshaw 1989) and as holistic models of personhood (Agha 2007a). Recognizing social types such as the redneck and the preppy boy, both regional and classed types, as complex models of being highlights the nuanced ways that regional identity is inextricably intertwined with gendered, classed, and linguistic practices.

I first illustrated the ways that upper-class young women in the South complicated the typical socioeconomic class status of a redneck, such that an upper-class male could acceptably embody a lower-class stereotype through his language and lifestyle. YLSM girls and their local community of upper-class peers embraced redneck identity to a certain extent, specifically when it was enacted by upper-class individuals who appropriated lower-class practices and attitudes, in ways that may parallel the ethnic appropriation of African American styles by whites (cf. Bucholtz 2011). The redneck's lower-class practices, exaggerated heterosexual masculinity, and linguistic markedness remained salient ways that an upper-class boy, Dave Clarke, was constructed as the epitome of Southern masculinity, reifying the links between regional, gendered, classed, and linguistic identities.

Second, I explored another way that YLSM members complicated the assumed

lower-class status of their own regional identity as Southerners. In particular, these young

women constructed two social models epitomizing Southern masculinity by arguing that

redneck and preppy masculinity, despite their salient differences, were both valid ways

for their male peers to embody Southern identity. Using the term "preppy" to describe

their own upper-class and almost exclusively white social circles, these girls adapted a

class- and race-based social type to describe their own locally valued version of regional

identity. They placed value on upper-class status, reflecting their somewhat insulated

lived experiences in an economically privileged community and distancing themselves

from the stigma associated with lower-class and linguistically marked Southerners.

In the cases of both Dave and Russell, these girls indirectly commented on the

gendered and classed assumptions of Southern identity. It is noteworthy that epitomizing

Southern masculinity, for both Dave and Russell, came with the risk of being either too

masculine or not masculine enough. On one hand, Dave's alignment with lower-class

redneck identity positioned him as hyper-masculine, potentially carrying some of the

stigma of redneck identity. On the other hand, while Russell's role as Peyton's boyfriend

positioned him as heterosexually masculine, his preppiness placed him in a precarious

position, close to the margins of acceptable gendered practices. Class status was a

prominent feature of YLSM members' identities as preppy Southern girls, both in their

construction of Dave as appropriating lower-class practices and in their praise of

Russell's upper-class identity. At the same time, these girls complicated the value of

regional language and identity, positively valuing certain features of Southern identity

and Southern language practices while mocking others.

Chapter 6.Indexing Southern Identity with /ai/ and /u/

This community of privileged white girls in the urban South was exposed to local as well as non-local linguistic norms; thus, they defined their own regional and linguistic identities in light of these often-competing standards. YLSM members generally shared ideologies about the role of Southern language in defining positively and negatively valued Southern identities (see Chapters 4 and 5), but their own personal relationships to regional identity also influenced their particular uses of Southern linguistic features. This chapter examines how two YLSM members—Claire, who described herself as very Southern, and Julie, who regarded herself as atypically Southern—employed features of Southern language, both in unmarked contexts and in strategic moments. In this case study, I present a quantitative and qualitative analysis of how these girls variably used regionally distinctive pronunciations of the vowels /ai/ and /u/ in ways that reflected their cultural positioning and their ideologies about Southern identity.

First, I explore how both girls used glide-weakened /ai/, perhaps the most salient phonological feature of the South, in their interview styles and in stylized moments. I find, perhaps unsurprisingly, that Claire, who identified herself as Southern in interviews, used more glide-weakened /ai/ than Julie in her interview speech; Julie reported that she only considered herself Southern as a result of her location. Yet, while the girls used /ai/ differently in unmarked contexts, they similarly employed a marked glide-weakened /ai/ for strategic purposes: first, styling and stylizing their own speech to align with preppy Southern identity, and, second, mocking the speech of redneck others to distance

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themselves from that type of Southern identity. Thus, /ai/ was used to draw both *inter*regional distinctions, constructing both girls as Southern in some moments, and *intra*regional distinctions, differentiating between types of Southern identities, in other moments.

Second, I show that Claire and Julie categorically used fronted /u/; back vowel fronting generally has been cited by scholars as simultaneously a feature of the language of the South and of other regions of the United States, including the Midwest and the West. Given the potential multivalence of this feature, I examine tokens of both girls' vowels and find that sub-phonemic variations in fronted /u/ correspond to differences in each girl's orientation to Southern identity. Specifically, Julie favored the use of what has been referred to as the "mainstream" realization of fronted /u/, the more diphthongal realization characteristic of the Midwest and the West, while Claire used both Southern and non-Southern realizations. I argue that Claire's flexible use of fronted /u/ realizations in her own linguistic style allowed her to perform a complex regional identity: she embraced a positively valued preppy Southern identity and distanced herself from negatively valued Southern types, echoing the distinctions both between regions and within the South. This analysis illustrates how these girls variously oriented to Southern identities using locally available linguistic resources, demonstrating how the indexical meanings of Southern language are shaped by both ideology and practice.

6.1. Claire and Julie: Different types of Southern girls

While the preppy model of Southern identity was commonly aspired to within the YLSM community, not all YLSM members aligned with it to the same degree. Drawing its members from the upper class of Midway, primarily white, Protestant, and often from

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established Southern families, YLSM was essentially a young female subset of preppy Southerners. Yet within this category were exceptions: individuals who came from a similar socioeconomic background but who expressed their regional identities in different ways. As two contrasting examples often cited by other YLSM members, Claire was seen as a typical preppy Southern girl and a typical YLSM member, but her friend and classmate Julie was not. Not only had they had attended the same Christian private school since the sixth grade, but they were both YLSM members and close friends who frequently attended the same social events on weekends.

With parents who had grown up locally, Claire saw herself as a Southern girl. Her friends agreed, specifically Julie, who described her in the following way: "[Claire is] very Southern…very Southern, conservative, that very typical Southern girl…with the-the accent too." This label of "conservative" is laden with multiple meanings, most likely in this moment indicating Claire's persona as a traditional Christian model of Southern femininity. According to Claire herself, she dressed "Southern" and "girly" as well, favoring brands like Lilly Pulitzer, a favorite among the Southern preppy set, and styles like sundresses, particularly in seersucker fabric.

In other ways also, Claire's identity was oriented towards the South: Claire went on to become the president of YLSM, a sorority which was itself steeped in tradition as a local institution of over sixty years. Claire also aspired to remain in the South and attend an in-state college despite having the funds to attend out of state like her older brother. Just as Lauren, in Chapter 4 (Example 4.4), singled out Claire's linguistic identity as Southern, so too does Julie in the quotation above. Specifically, her friends saw her "accent" as more representative of the region than their own accents, a fact which Claire

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does not entirely deny (although see Example 4.4 for Lauren and Claire's complication of this description).

In contrast, Julie presented her own identity as a girl in the South than a girl *of* the South despite having been born and raised in Midway. Responding to my question about whether she thought of herself as Southern, Julie answered, "I would say I definitely have a different kind of upbringing. My dad's Jewish; my mom's, well, not. But she's from Australia; my dad's from um Massachusetts. I'm not really the typical kind of like Southern girl." That is, Julie deemphasized her ties to the region on the basis of her family's non-Christian and non-Southern background, a fact that presupposed the hegemonic status of Christianity in the South, historically known as the Bible Belt.

Julie also looked outside of the South when drawing links to her past, present, and future. For example, her past, defined by her family heritage, was connected to New England and Australia. In her present life, she distanced herself from YLSM: she rarely attended sorority meetings, despite remaining a member throughout high school. Her future college aspirations, too, reflected an outward orientation: Julie's top college choices were not only universities out of state but also international ones. In addition, Julie did not see herself as linguistically Southern, explaining that she only learned "Southern etiquette" outside of the home unlike many of her friends in the area (see Example 4.2). She stated once that she sometimes sounded more Australian than Southern, a result of sounding more like her mother than her friends, a particular fact that Claire also mentioned as evidence that Julie, at times, seemed to make a conscious effort to sound distinctly non-Southern. These two girls' social and linguistic identities represented distinct ways to be Southern, different ways to orient to the region, and their

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identities reveal links between the cultural grounding of linguistic ideologies and linguistic practices.

6.2. Glide-Weakened /ai/

As evidenced in numerous studies of diverse populations across the South, the glide weakening of /ai/ remains a prominent marker of Southern identity even while its use in various phonetic environments and social groups in the region may vary drastically. This section presents the ways that Claire and Julie realized this vowel differently in unmarked speech contexts and provides a close analysis of the ways that these speakers employed this linguistic resource similarly. Both girls used glide-weakened /ai/ in stylizing the self and others for strategic purposes: aligning with the South by drawing an interregional distinction and distancing themselves from those deemed too Southern by drawing an intraregional distinction.

As a hallmark of Southern language, glide-weakened /ai/, represented in this analysis as /aĭ/, has been attested in the South since the beginning of the twentieth century (Bailey & Tillery 1996:313) and even called the "confederate vowel" because of its strong connection with the region (Sledd 1966:25). This Southern realization of /ai/ with a weakened but not fully deleted offglide (Anderson 2003; Childs 2005) remains a salient marker of Southern identity to both Southerners and non-Southerners alike (Torbert 2010), with listeners potentially able to differentiate between seven degrees of glide weakening from a fully present glide to a near-monophthongal realization (Plichta & Preston 2005).

This well-recognized phonological feature has been the focus of linguistic study with particular attention to its conditioned use and sociolinguistic distribution within

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communities of speakers varying by place, race, gender, and class. The position of /ai/ in closed or open syllables, as well as its following environment, whether followed by voiced or voiceless segments, has been shown to affect the presence and degree of glide weakening. Recognizing dialect diversity in the South, researchers have focused on the constraints on glide weakening in specific Southern communities. For example, in white communities, /ai/ is most likely to be glide-weakened in open syllables followed by prevoiced environments, and glide weakening is least likely to occur in prevoiceless environments. In many white communities, the distribution of glide weakening across these environments reflects a class distinction in which frequent glide-weakened /ai/ is associated with lower social status and with lower-class speech (e.g., Thomas & Bailey 1998; Feagin 2000; Thomas 2001:37). This is not the case for all speakers, however: for example, for African Americans in various areas within and outside of the South (Anderson 2002; Mallinson 2002; Fridland 2003a), as well as for Appalachian and some Texas whites (Hall 1942; Anderson 1999; Thomas 1997; 2001), glide-weakened /ai/ may appear to occur similarly across phonetic environments.

There are certainly Southern populations in which the use of glide-weakened /ai/ is changing, for example in its noted decline in urban areas (Thomas 2001; Baranowski 2008a; Prichard 2010) as well as specifically among urban youth (Labov, Ash & Boberg 2006). Still, as Feagin has noted (2000), the prevalence of glide-weakened /ai/ in open syllables persists, and these pronunciations remain a hallmark of Southern speech.

6.2.1. Methods for analyzing /ai/

In this section, I examine two YLSM members' realizations of the vowel /ai/, using both quantitative and qualitative analyses. First, in order to compare how Claire

and Julie use glide-weakened forms of this vowel, I selected stressed tokens of /ai/

occurring in informal group interview contexts, drawing from approximately 7 minutes of

each girl's speech. The tokens were selected from speech that was not directly about any

saliently Southern topic, given the potential for regional topics to influence the use of

regional linguistic features. (Later in this analysis, I turn my attention to the use of /ai/

specifically in moments in which Southern topics are foregrounded.) Using Praat

(Boersma & Weenink 2014), I calculated the first two formant measurements at three

different time points across the duration of each vowel, including 20% after the onset of

the vowel, the midpoint, and 80% after the onset of the vowel, in order to illustrate the

changes in the vowel's articulation across the nucleus and the offglide (following Reed

2014). From these formant readings, I calculated the Euclidean distance according to the

formula below to quantify the movement of the vowel in two-dimensional space.

Equation 1. Euclidean distance formula

$$\sqrt{(F1_{20\%} - F1_{80\%})^2 + (F2_{20\%} - F2_{80\%})^2}$$

Euclidean distance provides a single value to represent the amount of change in F1 and

F2 simultaneously (Wright & Nichols 2009), with a larger Euclidean distance indicating

greater movement over the duration of the vowel. That is, a realization of /ai/ with a high

Euclidean distance would have a non-weakened offglide and therefore sound more

diphthongal while a realization of /ai/ with a low Euclidean distance would have a

weakened offglide and sound more monophthongal. It is important to note that while

formants are measured in Hertz, the measures of vowel movement in Euclidean distance

do not directly correspond to the same unit; instead, they represent perceptual distance rather than a physical reality. Because Euclidean distances represent movement relative to each vowel, these distances can be compared across speakers without requiring data normalization (Maclagan & Hay 2007:13).

My calculations are based on a subset of tokens (N=28 for Claire and N=31 for Julie) that excluded all vowels which were shorter than 0.1 seconds, because such short durations necessarily result in shorter offglides than in longer vowels, and all vowels occurring in syllables with final liquid or nasal consonants (/l/, /r/, /m/, /n/) because of these consonants' strong vowel-coloring effects. Additionally, in my final calculations of each speaker's pronunciations of /ai/, I included no more than 5 occurrences of any particular lexical item in order to avoid lexical effects which may skew the data, following practices described by Thomas (2001:14). Thus, only the first 5 realizations of a single word were included in my analysis, a practice that limited the number of tokens from common words such as "I" and "like." I did not separately examine the various post-vocalic environments—namely in open syllables, pre-voiceless, and pre-voiced environments—because the resulting data set was small; however, it should be noted that the distribution of glide weakening across these environments is associated with classed and racialized identification in the South.

In the qualitative analysis of each girl's use of /ai/, I compare moments in which a glide-weakened /ai/ seemed to take on additional meaning as a marker of regional identity, such as in contexts where Southern identity was foregrounded. In order to examine the differences in these realizations of /ai/, I provide simplified spectrograms, or visualizations of the formant contours of the vowels, to illustrate the degree of glide

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presence or glide weakening, linking these realizations to the speakers' stances toward

Southern identity in these moments.

6.2.2. Quantitative comparison of /ai/ use

Both Claire and Julie used a range of /ai/ realizations, with some tokens featuring

a clear glide, as in pre-voiceless environments such as in the word "like," and with some

tokens sounding much more monophthongal, as may be expected in the word "I." With

each speaker's degree of glide weakening represented by Euclidean distance, the

following figure (Figure 6.1) shows the difference between Claire and Julie's typical

pronunciations of /ai/. While the ranges of each girl's Euclidean distance overlap, notable

differences remain, with half of Claire's tokens falling in the extremely glide-weakened

range below 108, and with the middle 50 percent of Julie's tokens falling in the higher

range of 207 to 448. Claire's lower Euclidean distances indicate realizations with a more

weakened offglide compared to the higher Euclidean distances that characterize Julie's

pronunciations of /ai/: that is, many of Claire's realizations of /ai/ were more

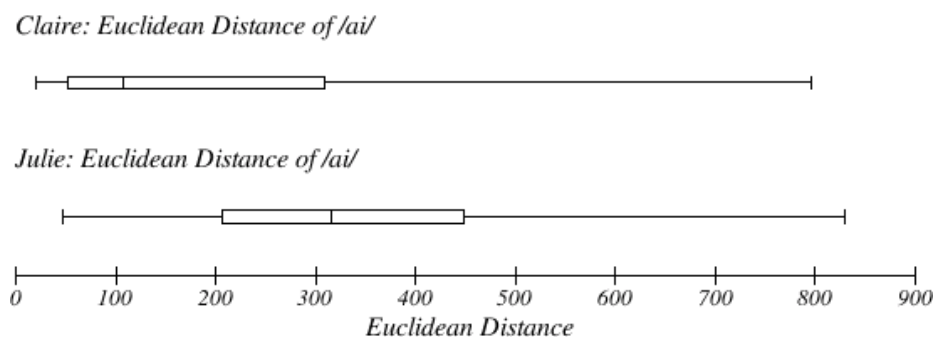monophthongal than Julie's vowels, which were in turn more diphthongal.

Figure 6.1. Euclidean distance by speaker

Table 6.1. Data for Figure 6.1, in Euclidean distance

Speaker	Claire	Julie
Min	21	46
Q1	52	207
Median	108	315
Q3	309	448
Max	796	829
N	28	31

Illustrations of near-median realizations of /ai/ are provided in the figures below (Figures 6.2 and 6.3), with arrows indicating Formants 1 and 2. While the first two formants are nearly stable in Claire's vowel—that is, the glide is extremely weakened and would be heard as a near monophthong—Julie's vowel shows F2 rising, indicating that her realization of /ai/ contains a glide that is more diphthongal than Claire's.
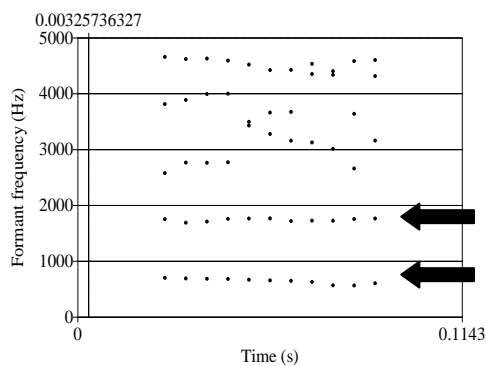
Figure 6.2. Claire's median token, Euclidean distance: 108
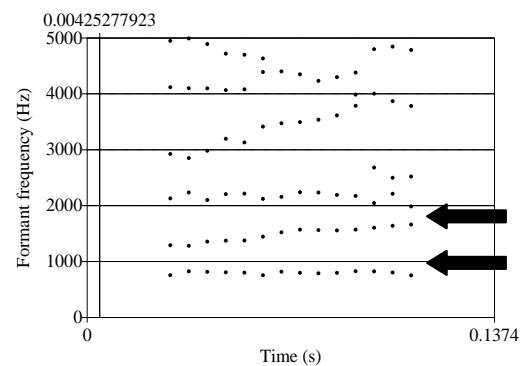
Figure 6.3. Julie's median token, Euclidean distance: 315

As these data show, Claire and Julie used Southern variants in ways that were expected based on their respective cultural identifications as Southern speakers; that is, Claire's realizations of /ai/ tended to be more glide-weakened than Julie's in general.

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Thus, these girls' everyday linguistic identities, as approximated by their language use in informal interviews with close peers and a familiar researcher, corresponded to their regional orientation. These results seem to confirm the countless studies that tie monophthongal or glide-weakened pronunciations of /ai/ to an indexical meaning of Southernness.

6.2.3. Styling and Stylizing Southern /ai/

Although Claire and Julie pronounced /ai/ differently in regionally unmarked contexts, they also used the /ai/ vowel as a stylistic resource to convey similar indexical meanings. On one hand, they used glide-weakened /ai/ in order to construct their own identities as preppy Southerners, Claire by incorporating this resource into her linguistic style and Julie by strategically stylizing herself as a preppy Southern girl. On the other hand, both girls drew on stylized pronunciations of glide-weakened /ai/, with an elongated vowel and exaggerated glide-weakening relative to their unmarked speech, to mock their friend Dave and distance themselves from the redneck Southerners that he was seen as representing.

6.2.3.1. Aligning with preppy Southerners

The next two examples illustrate how Claire and Julie used glide-weakened /ai/ to identify themselves with the South. In the first example, seen earlier in Chapter 4 (Example 4.4), Claire uses a glide-weakened realization of /ai/ as an element of her own linguistic style, heightening her connection with the South. She pronounces the first-person pronouns "my" and "I" (lines 3 and 5) as glide-weakened, represented as [aĭ] in the transcripts below, when she clarifies her identity as a Southern girl, one with a mild Southern accent that is compatible with her class status as a preppy Southern girl.

Example 6.1 "My accent's not that thick"

1	Lauren:	she has a pretty Southern accent too	
2	Karen:	yeah	
3	Claire:	**<u>my</u>** accent's not that thick but	*my*: [mai] as glide-weakened [maĭ]
4	Karen:	ha ha	
5	Claire:	[**<u>I</u>** love Lilly[31]]	*I*: [ai] as glide-weakened [aĭ]
6	Lauren:	[some things that like]	
7		some things you [2 say are pretty 2]	
8	Karen:	[2 I think Peyton's 2] a [3 pretty good accent 3]	
9	Claire:	and [3 I wear a lot of seer 3]	
		sucker	

In this excerpt, Claire is defending herself against the assertion that she may be the most Southern girl present. She does not deny Lauren's claim, but she does qualify her Southern identity, first by mitigating the quality of her accent ("my accent's not that thick," line 3) and then by specifying that she embodies a preppy Southern identity based on her sartorial choices ("I love [the brand] Lilly [Pulitzer], and I wear a lot of seersucker," lines 5, 9). By linking her style with white, upper-class Southern femininity, she implicitly distinguishes herself from stigmatized linguistic forms associated with Southern lower-class identity, such as the redneck. While claiming that she does not have a strong Southern accent, Claire employs a linguistic feature notably associated with the South. Her pronunciations of /ai/ in the words "my" and "I" (lines 3 and 5) are glide-weakened, as demonstrated in the near-stable contours, particularly of F2, across the duration of both vowels, seen in Figures 6.4 and 6.5.[32]

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[31] A brand name: short for Lilly Pulitzer
[32] Claire's articulation of "I" in line 9 is not analyzed here because of the quality of the recording at that moment, specifically as a result of Claire and Karen's overlapping speech.
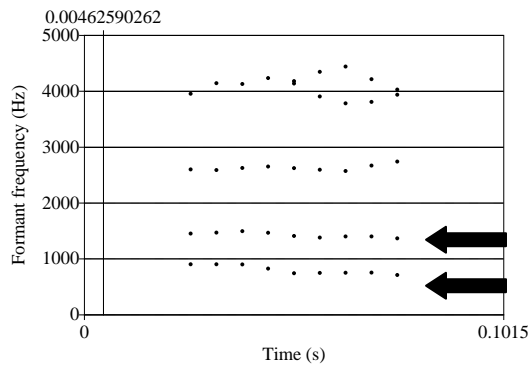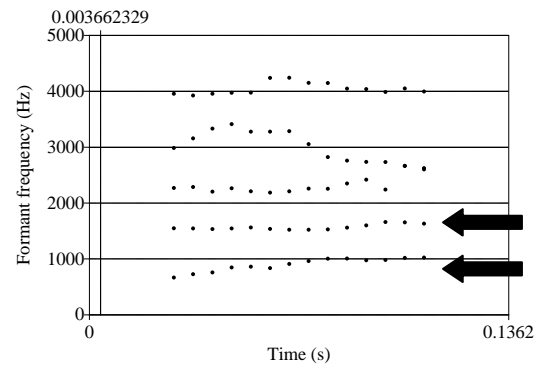
Figure 6.4. Claire's "my," Example 6.1

Figure 6.5. Claire's "I," Example 6.1

Both of these realizations are similar to Claire's median token of /ai/ above, indicative of a more monophthongal pronunciation. Claire neither exaggerates nor avoids her typical pronunciation of /ai/ when she qualifies her Southern identity in this moment. Together, the content and form of her utterances here, in an unstylized moment, demonstrate her close ties to preppy Southern identity and the small, admissible, degree of a Southern accent that may come with it.

The next example illustrates a similar way that Julie uses glide-weakened /ai/ to emphasize her positioning within the South, not by adopting /ai/ as a part of her own linguistic style, but by drawing on an exaggerated glide-weakened /ai/ in stylizing (Coupland 2001) her own speech. In Example 6.2, Julie stylizes herself in a past moment in which she shifted into a Southern linguistic style and used glide-weakened /ai/ when talking with the sorority advisor Ms. Jones whom she perceived as sounding particularly Southern. Julie describes her own tendency to use a Southern accent to accommodate to speakers whom she believes expect to hear one, and voices herself using an exaggerated glide-weakened /ai/ in the phrase "hi, Ms. Jones" (line 10).

Example 6.2 "Hi Ms. Jones"

1	Julie:	a- a- there's always times
2		though I'm talking to Ms. Jones
3		it comes out
4	Sara:	°yeah
5	Charlotte:	[yeah:]
6	Sara:	[haha]
7	Julie:	dead serious
8		I was on the phone to her earlier
9		I was
10		{ ↑**hi** Ms. ↓Jones } ((sing-song)) *hi*: [hai] as glide-weakened [haĭ]
11		and I was just like
12		why am I speaking like [this]
13	Charlotte:	[yeah]
14	Julie:	I don't talk like this usually

Julie's imitation of herself saying "hi Ms. Jones" in line 10 is characterized by a number of prosodic features, including raised pitch and a sing-song quality, as well as the lengthened and glide-weakened pronunciation of /ai/ shown in Figure 6.6. While Julie's realization of /ai/ in "hi" (line 10) cannot be accurately compared to other instances of this vowel in the surrounding speech because of Julie's fast speech rate, a comparison with her median token of a diphthongal /ai/ from above (Figure 6.3) illustrates that the instance of "hi" in line 10 is indeed a more monophthongal realization. Julie's formants remain stable even over the course of this elongated vowel measuring over 0.2 seconds, more than twice as long as any of the other /ai/ realizations in this excerpt.
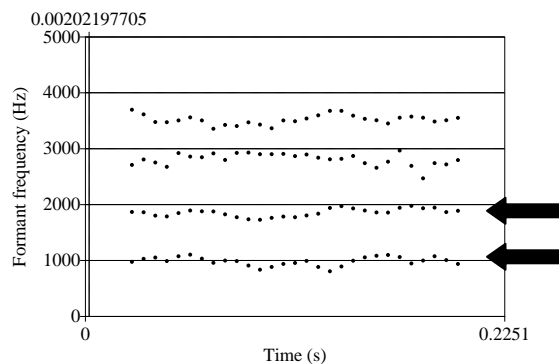
0.00202197705

Figure 6.6. Julie's stylized "hi," Example 6.2

This example illustrates Julie's awareness of her ability to sound Southern when she sees it as appropriate. The explicit framing of line 10 as stylized speech, cued by its distinctive linguistic form, create a clear distance between Julie's normal speech style and the style she adopted in a past conversation with Ms. Jones. In accommodating to Ms. Jones, Julie performed a Southern identity, that of a typical YLSM girl, with a high pitch and Southern linguistic features, a performance with similar aims to those of the Texas speakers examined by Johnstone (1999). Such stylization presented Julie's hybrid alignment with the South: she was at once both adopting a linguistic resource indexical of Southern identity and distancing herself from the use of that resource by stylizing and quoting herself. The above two examples show how glide-weakened /ai/ can be used as a linguistic resource in order to align with preppy Southern identity, first, in Claire's use of /ai/ as part of her own linguistic style and, second, in Julie's adoption of /ai/ in a stylized moment.

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6.2.3.2. Distancing from redneck Southerners

Another way that Claire and Julie used glide-weakened /ai/ to a similar end, specifically in their stylized speech, was in mocking other people whom they saw as more Southern than themselves. The girls exploited this linguistic feature for its widely recognized social meaning, as a stereotypical marker of Southern identity, and used it to draw an intraregional distinction between their own regional identities and those that they disparaged as being *too* Southern. One such target of mockery was Dave Clarke, the brother of YLSM member Liza Clarke; Dave was mentioned in several conversations I heard and interviews I recorded as embodying a particular notable Southern identity. In Example 6.3 below, Claire stylizes an exaggerated glide-weakened pronunciation of /ai/ when she imitates Dave's speech in a video recording that the girls had seen earlier.

Example 6.3 "I feel like I'm in space"

1	Claire:	{ °stank bugs } ((breathy))	*stink*: [stɪnk] lowered as [stænk]
2		{ °**I** feel **like** **I'm** in space } ((breathy))	*I, like, I'm*: glide-weakened as [aɪ], [laɪk], [aɪm]
			space: [speis] lowered as [spais]
3	Sara:	what? ((laughing))	
4	Liza:	there's this video of my brother	

Serving to shift the conversation to a specific past moment in which Dave was seen as acting and sounding particularly Southern, Claire's voicing of Dave (lines 1-2) includes numerous features of Southern language: the lowering of [ɪ] to [æ] in "stink" (Thomas 2004:316), the lowering of [ei] to [ai] (Labov 1994; Thomas 2004) in "space," and glide-weakened /ai/. Claire's characterization of Dave as an extremely Southern individual is underscored by the co-occurrence (Ervin-Tripp 1972) of these often stereotypical Southern linguistic features, in an example of the clustering of linguistic

features to perform a style (Campbell-Kibler 2011; Podesva 2011), such as Dave's Southern style.

Because Claire whispers her imitation of Dave in lines 1-2, her breathy voice quality makes it difficult to calculate the precise movement of formants for the full duration of the vowel. However, the relatively stable F2s remain visible in the following formant contours (Figures 6.7, 6.8, and 6.9), with the exception of the word "like" (Figure 6.8), whose pre-voiceless environment is the least likely phonetic environment in which glide weakening occurs among non-lower class Southern whites.
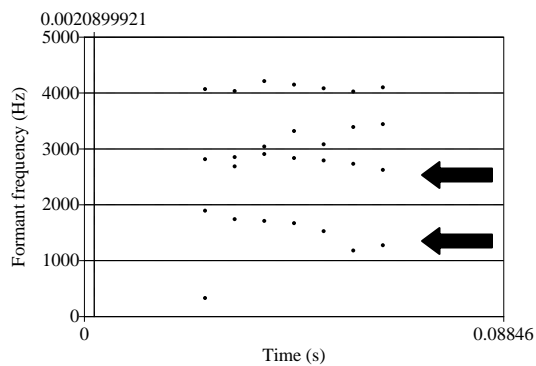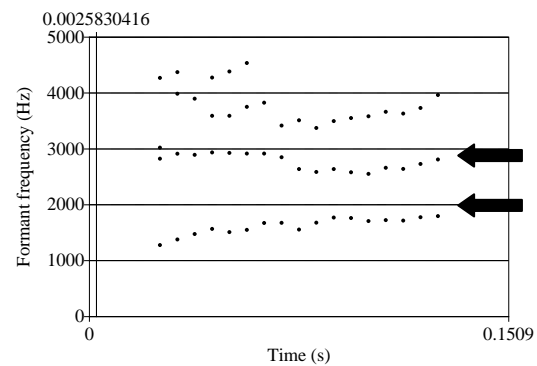
Figure 6.7. Claire's stylized "I," Example 6.3

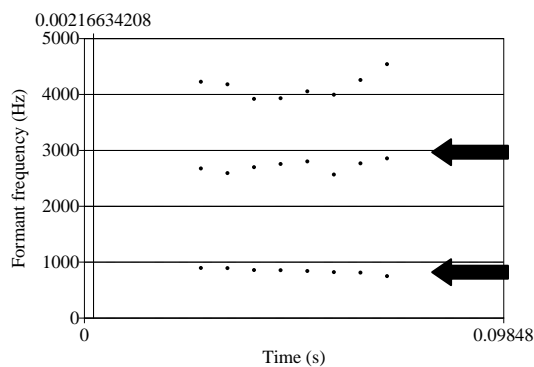**Figure 6.8. Claire's stylized "like," Example 6.3**

Figure 6.9. Claire stylized "I'm," Example 6.3

In this moment, the use of these Southern linguistic features in mocking Dave seems to work as a distancing move: while Claire uses glide-weakened /ai/ in her own speech, to some degree and in some moments, the exaggerated realization of this feature, attributed to Dave, creates a disconnect between Claire's personal linguistic identity and Dave's perceived linguistic practices.

The next example, presented earlier as part of Example 5.1, again illustrates the use of exaggerated glide-weakened /ai/ in order to draw attention to the difference between the girls' linguistic practices and Dave's, specifically when Julie and her friend Charlotte describe his Southern accent.

Example 6.4 "Off the bayou river"

1	Julie:	it's: ((Dave's accent))	
2		where are you from	
3		[like]	
4	Charlotte:	[yeah]	
5	Julie:	where did that [even come] from ((laughing))	
6	Charlotte:	[yeah]	
7	Julie:	um	
8		off the { ↑**ba**you river }	*bayou*: [baiju] as glide-weakened [baːɪ̆ju] *river*: [ɹɪvəɹ] as final non-rhotic [ɹɪvə]
9		[like oh] **my**	*my*: [maiː] not glide-weakened
10	Charlotte:	[yeah]	

Just as in Example 6.3 in which Claire attributes Southern linguistic features to Dave by quoting him, Julie links the use of Southern language features, both glide-weakened /ai/ and nonrhoticity in line 8, with Dave by voicing a description of his Southern identity. The /ai/ in the first syllable of "bayou" shows some change in the first two formants but is relatively stable (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Especially when compared to Julie's pronunciation of "my" in line 9 (Figure 6.11), which occurs in

an open syllable environment and is therefore more likely to be affected by glide-weakening, the contrast between the markedly voiced /ai/ in "bayou" and the unmarked /ai/ in "my" appears stark.
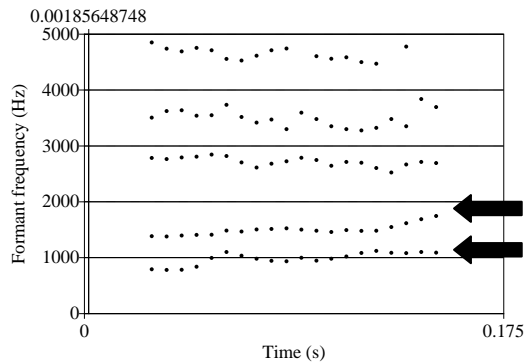

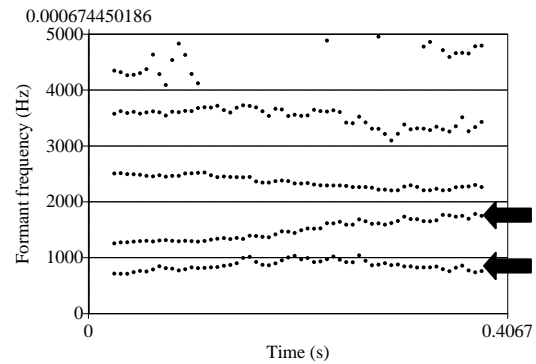**Figure 6.10. Julie's stylized "bayou," Example 6.4**

Figure 6.11. Julie's unstylized "my," Example 6.4

By using Southern linguistic features that she would not normally use in her own speech, Julie characterizes Dave's accent as extremely, and almost exotically, Southern given their shared urban upbringing far from any bayous. Both Julie and Claire, who used glide-weakened /ai/ differently in unmarked speech contexts, similarly drew on the stereotypical indexical meaning of this vowel realization in their mockings of Dave. Their stylization of Dave's speech constructed him as sounding *too* Southern and allowed the girls to disalign from Southern identities like his.

6.2.4. Discussion of /ai/

Because they grew up in the same small community in the South, it may not be surprising that both Claire and Julie recognized and exploited the social meaning of a linguistic feature like glide-weakened /ai/. Widely recognized as a marker of regional identity, this feature was available to both speakers as a way to define themselves as Southern girls, embodying the positively valued regional identity of typical YLSM

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members as preppy Southern girls. There is a difference, however, between the ways that Claire and Julie used /ai/ to construct their own identities as Southern girls: while Claire's use of glide-weakened /ai/ in Example 6.1 may have simply been primed by the context in which her own Southern identity was being discussed, Julie's use of glide-weakened /ai/ in Example 6.2 was a clearly stylized performance, one accompanied by metacommentary about how Julie does, at times, sound Southern. But in other moments of parodic stylization, both girls used glide-weakened /ai/ to maintain social and linguistic distance from other types of Southerners, specifically those like Dave Clarke, who was seen as redneck, unrefined, and exaggeratedly Southern.

6.3. Fronted /u/

As another feature of Southern phonology, the fronting of back vowels has also been historically associated with the South and continues to be a feature of Southern language practices, although one much less overtly associated with South identity compared to glide-weakened /ai/. Indeed, while the glide-weakened pronunciation of /ai/ was occasionally cited as a marker of Southern identity, the pronunciation of back vowels, including /u/, warranted no explicit metacommentary. The more recent prominence of back vowel fronting in the South and in other regions such as the Midwest and the West, and specifically among younger generations of women, suggests that this linguistic variable may be on the rise as a gendered feature of youth identity that is not distinctive to any particular regional variety. In this section, I examine Claire and Julie's pronunciation of /u/, one of the back vowels subject to this movement, highlighting both their similar rates of fronting and their contrasting uses of particular fronted variants,

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showing that each girl's use of fronted /u/ correlated with her orientation relative to Southern linguistic identities.

A fronted pronunciation of the vowel /u/ is attested in both Southern American English and varieties of most other regions within the United States. The fronting of back vowels, attested in /u/, /ʊ/, and /o/, has been documented as a feature of Southern American English since the late nineteenth century (Kurath & McDavid 1961; Thomas 2001), with attention to the social breakdown of its use as well as its phonetic contexts (Kurath & McDavid 1961; Thomas & Bailey 1998; Fridland & Bartlett 2006; Baranowski 2008b). In more recent years, it has also been documented not only in numerous regional varieties of American English including the West (Hinton et al. 1987; Di Paolo & Faber 1990; Ward 2003; Hall-Lew 2005; Eckert 2008b), the Midwest (Ash 1996; Thomas 2001; Labov, Ash & Boberg 2006), and the Northeast (Thomas 2001), as well as in Canadian English (Clarke, Elms & Youssef 1995), but it has also been attested in non-white varieties of English such as Chicano English and African American English (Fought 1999; Anderson, Milroy & Nguyen 2002; Mallinson 2002; Fridland 2003b).

However, researchers have described nuanced distinctions between the realizations of fronted /u/ specifically in terms of formant trajectories across the vowel, associating different patterns of fronting with Southern and non-Southern, or "mainstream," varieties of back vowel fronting (Hall-Lew 2005; Koops 2010; Hinrichs, Bohmann & Gorman 2013). Southern fronted /u/ appears to be more monophthongal while mainstream, or "supra-regional" (Koops 2010), fronted /u/ tends to be more diphthongal, starting front and offgliding back. Additionally, /u/ fronting in the South has been described as categorical, occurring in all phonetic environments (Labov, Ash &

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Boberg 2006:152; Fridland & Bartlett 2006; Baranowski 2008b), while in other regions /u/ fronting is prohibited in pre-/l/ environments such as in the word "school." More recently, Koops (2010) has found that younger speakers in the South do not front across all environments and instead follow the constraint against fronting before /l/.

It is unlikely that the prevalence of back vowel fronting in other regions is the result of a spread from within the South (Fridland & Bartlett 2006; Koops 2010), especially given the stigma of using Southern language features. Regardless of the cause or trajectory of this spread, the presence of back vowel fronting in so many different varieties of American English, and particularly the fact that its use is being led by younger speakers and by women in various regions (Feagin 1986; Fridland 2001; Labov 2001; Ward 2003; Labov, Ash & Boberg 2006; Hall-Lew 2005; Baranowski 2008b) points to its potential social meaning as an emerging standard feature of American English. Even if this is the case, the history of back vowel fronting within the South continues its salient link with this region in the face of its expansion elsewhere, resulting in the multivalent social meanings of fronted /u/ in the United States.

6.3.1. Methods for analyzing /u/

In my analysis of fronted /u/, I first provide a brief quantitative overview of each speaker's pronunciations of /u/.[33] Tokens of this vowel were drawn from the same informal interview contexts as for the analysis of /ai/, specifically chosen to avoid any content that was directly related to the South. Since the fronting of a vowel can be seen in a high F2 value, F2s were calculated across all tokens of /u/, using the mean across the

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[33] These data are not normalized, despite my comparison of formant values across different speakers, because both speakers are female, the same age, and are similar in size; thus, any physiological differences between them are already minimized.

vowel's duration. Providing values of F2 in these tokens of /u/ will sufficiently illustrate the frontness of the vowel but will not demonstrate the relative positioning of /u/ with respect to other vowels. Like with the analysis of /ai/, certain tokens were excluded from my calculations, including those shorter than 0.1s, those preceding liquid or nasal environments, particularly given that /u/ has been shown to behave differently in pre-lateral environments as described above. Again, I limited the number of tokens of the same word to 5 in order to avoid lexical effects, and ended up with a small but illustrative data set of N=16 for Claire and N=21 for Julie partly because /u/ is less common than other English vowels in spontaneous speech.

In the qualitative analysis which complements this brief illustration of Claire and Julie's fronting of /u/, I compare the sub-phonemic differences in F1 and F2 contours in tokens of /u/. I examine only a small subset of tokens of /u/ from each speaker in restricted phonetic contexts to illustrate contours more clearly. Specifically, this smaller set of tokens includes only those that follow a /t/ or /d/ onset, which has been thought to be the most likely environment for fronting (Hall-Lew 2005), although this effect may be minimal (Koops 2010); those that are in open syllables and intonation unit final so as to avoid any effect of the following environment; and those that are sustained for at least 0.2s, allowing sufficient time for the realization of a complex contour. That is, this much smaller subset, N=5 for Claire and N=6 for Julie, consists of the words "too," "two," and "do" occurring intonation unit finally. Following Koops (2010) and Hinrichs et al. (2013), I use visualizations of the formants across each vowel to show how these speakers, in different moments, rely on different realizations of fronted /u/ vowels to take stances toward their own Southern identities.

6.3.2. Quantitative comparison of /u/

With fronted /u/ as a feature of both Southern language practices as well as so-called mainstream language practices, its use led by younger generations and by women, it is not surprising that both Claire and Julie pronounced /u/ as fronted. Since Claire and Julie observed the constraint against fronting before /l/, the difference in their fronted and non-fronted realizations of /u/ can be illustrated with a comparison of /u/ in these different phonetic environments. Table 6.2 demonstrates the difference in F2 values for these girls' pre-lateral back vowel /u/, around 1000Hz, and their fronted /u/ in all other cases, around 2000Hz, a value more indicative of a front vowel than a back one.

Table 6.2. Average F2 values for pre-lateral and non-pre-lateral /u/ in Hz

	/ul/			/u/		
	Average F2	Standard Deviation	N	Average F2	Standard Deviation	N
Claire	1141	215	5	2028	245	16
Julie	965	167	6	2011	194	21

6.3.3. Styling Southern and Mainstream /u/

Recent studies have shown that a fronted /u/ phoneme can take two general shapes—one monophthongal, one diphthongal—each of which is associated with different subsets of local populations. Hall-Lew (2005) shows that older rural rancher males in Arizona tend to use a more monophthongal and more fronted /u/ than their younger urban counterparts whose /u/ fronting more closely follows the Western Vowel Shift (or California Vowel Shift). Koops (2010) finds that both Southern American English (SAE) and non-Southern (or Mainstream American English, MAE) fronted /u/ occurs in Houston, Texas, with the mainstream /u/, the more diphthongal of the two,

favored by young women. Building on this finding, Hinrichs et al. (2013) argue that diphthongal /u/, the mainstream variant, is currently part of "an on-going change from above," led by women and more common in formal rather than informal contexts (10). So while Southern back vowel fronting is associated with an older Southern vowel shift, mainstream back vowel fronting appears to be becoming more common in other regions.

Claire and Julie categorically pronounced /u/ as fronted compared with its relative position in pre-lateral environments, but these two disparate considerations left the potential for multiple social meanings attributed to this single linguistic variable. Given that the Southern variant and the mainstream variant were both likely influences in the YLSM community of young women in the South, this section examines the sub-phonemic differences in a subset of the tokens of fronted /u/ for both Julie and Claire (see Section 6.3.1), finding that Julie and Claire used different contours in their /u/ vowels, the social meanings of which corresponded to each girl's Southern identity.

The mainstream fronted /u/ is described as having a low and slightly rising F1 and a high and sharply and steadily falling F2. The falling F2 makes this realization sound more like a diphthong than a stable fronted vowel. All of the formant contours for Julie's realizations (N=6) followed the patterns expected for the mainstream fronted /u/, such as seen in the sample vowel in Figure 6.12, suggesting that Julie used this variant consistently.
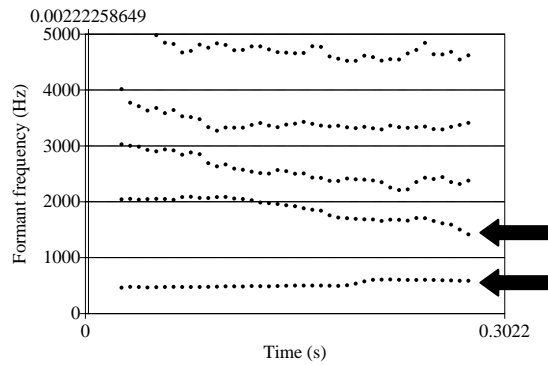
0.00222258649

Figure 6.12. Julie's /u/ with mainstream contours of F1 and F2

In comparison, Claire's /u/ realizations did not all follow the same pattern.

Instead, two of Claire's tokens closely approximated mainstream contours, with the high

but sharply and steadily falling F2, yet without a slightly rising F1, as in Figure 6.13.

Meanwhile, other tokens of Claire's fronted /u/ (N=3) more closely resembled the

contours expected for the Southern American English realization, characterized by an F1

with an early peak and perhaps a slight fall, and an F2 which includes a near-steady state

portion possibly with a gradual fall, as in Figure 6.14 where F2 is steady until near the
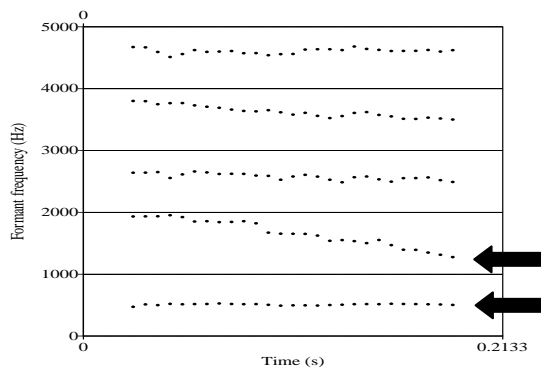
midpoint of the vowel.

Figure 6.13. Claire's /u/ with mainstream contours of F1 and F2
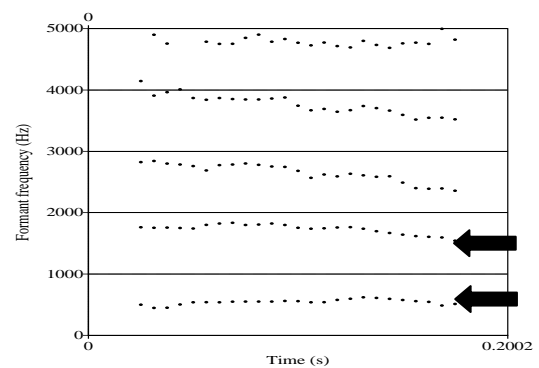

Figure 6.14. Claire's /u/ with Southern contours of F1 and F2

Thus, Julie used a mainstream fronted /u/ exclusively in the six cases observed, seemingly aligning with a supra-regional rather than region-specific identity. Claire fluctuated between mainstream and Southern contours of fronted /u/, shifting her alignment with the region in different moments. Examining Claire's variable use of fronted /u/ in situated interactional moments highlights how she drew on these sub-phonemic differences to position herself in relation to her Southern identity. Specifically, Claire alternated between Southern and mainstream fronted /u/ in order to claim a particular positively valued type of Southern identity as preppy (Example 6.5 and Example 6.6) and to distance herself from an undesirable "country" or "small town" Southern identity (Example 6.7), at times also invoking the regional meaning of glide-weakened /ai/ as a Southern resource as well.

6.3.3.1. Aligning with preppy Southerners
One way that Claire seemed to strategically use a Southern contour for fronted /u/, a more monophthongal than diphthongal realization, was to align specifically with preppy Southern identity, defined not only by region but also by racial and socioeconomic privilege. In the following example, when Claire and other girls are naming particularly Southern aspects of their lives, Claire suggests golfing, accompanied by country club membership, as a way that her family enacts Southern identity, and she uses multiple Southern linguistic features to do so, both Southern fronted /u/, represented as [ʉ] in the transcripts below, and glide-weakened /ai/.

Example 6.5 "I think golfing too"

1	Claire:	I think golfing **<u>too</u>**	*too*: [tu] fronted with Southern contours as [tʉ]
2	Liza:	yeah	
3		like River Crest ((a local country club))	
4	Claire:	**<u>my</u>** family's big in golf	*my*: [mai] as glide-weakened [maĭ]
5	Sara:	do yall all go to River Crest	
6	Liza:	mhm	
7	Claire:	mhm	

In line 1, Claire's fronted /u/ follows a Southern contour, mirroring the content of this excerpt about ways of enacting Southern identity via social practices. When discussing golfing as a Southern pastime that is specifically enabled by socioeconomic privilege and membership in an exclusive country club, Claire uses a Southern fronted /u/ (Figure 6.15) as well as a realization of glide-weakened /ai/ in line 4, determined using the methods outlined in the previous section (the /ai/ in line 1, in "I," is too short in duration to be analyzed). Claire's fronted /u/ follows a Southern contour, with an F2 that begins fronted with a steady-state period and then falls slightly around the midpoint.
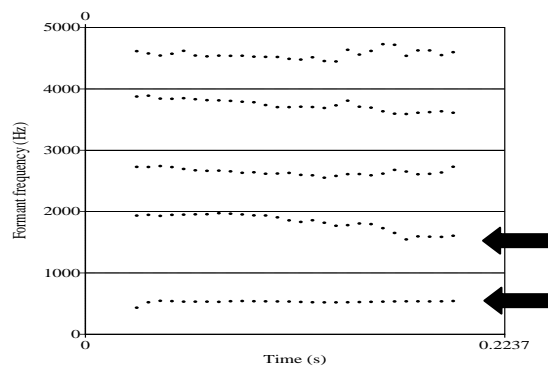

Figure 6.15. Claire's "too," Example 6.5

The co-occurrence of Southern /u/ with glide-weakened realizations of /ai/ further illustrates the connection between Southern language practices and Southern social

practices, specifically constructing the linguistic style of the preppy, economically

privileged, Southern set, similar to Claire's use of glide-weakened /ai/ in Example 6.1.

Claire aligns with the South via her family, both their membership at River Crest, the

local country club most associated with leisure golfing among their community, and their

fondness for golfing.

In another instance, Claire also uses a Southern fronted /u/ in order to align with

the South, again specifically through her family. In Example 6.6, Claire answers my

question about where YLSM members' parents are from, saying that not only is her

mother from Midway, but that she attends the same school her mother did. In line 4,

Claire uses two salient Southern vowel features: glide-weakened /ai/ in "my" and fronted

/u/ in "too."

Example 6.6 "My mom went to Fairmont too"

1	Sara:	yalls parents from
2		Midway
3		…
4	Claire:	**<u>my</u>** mom went to Fairmont **<u>too</u>**	*my*: [mai] as glide-weakened [maĭ]
			too: [tu] fronted with Southern
			contours as [tʉ]
5	Sara:	oh wow

Again the co-occurrence of two Southern features in Claire's linguistic style

demonstrates in form the regional identity that Claire claims in content. Having Southern

parents, including a mother who grew up in the same city as Claire, strengthens Claire's

connection to Midway since her locally oriented dialect development was reinforced at

home. The fronted /u/ in line 4 is realized with a Southern F2 contour (Figure 6.16), more

steady and less falling over the duration of the vowel than the contour above in Example 6.5.
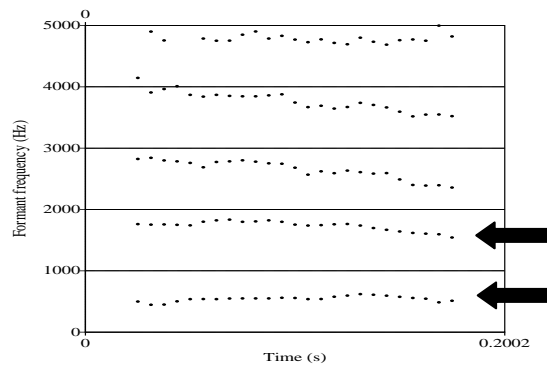

Figure 6.16. Claire's "too," Example 6.6

The positioning of a Southern fronted /u/ in the same intonation unit as a glide-weakened /ai/ and its co-occurrence with content that highlights Claire's Southern heritage indicate that this realization of /u/ likely indexes Southern identity. Claire references her family's established place in a Southern urban area and at the private school that both she and her mother attended. While not directly citing preppy Southern identity, except perhaps through naming her school where most of the student body would be described as preppy, Claire claims and aligns with a Southern identity that is positively valued. In both of the examples above, Claire's reliance on a Southern realization of fronted /u/ closely aligned her with Southern identity, via both the socioeconomic privilege of preppy Southern identity and her familial connection to the city where she lived.

6.3.3.2. Distancing from rural Southerners

The use of a fronted /u/ did not always align Claire with the South. Claire used a mainstream fronted /u/, a more diphthongal pronunciation, in order to distance herself

from the types of Southern identity and Southern language practices that she viewed

negatively. In Example 6.7, seen earlier in Chapter 5 (Example 5.2), Claire and Liza

discuss different ways to be and sound Southern, including "country" and "small town"

identities, which Claire transitions into the example of Liza's brother Dave specifically as

someone who is differently Southern. Claire's fronted /u/ in line 5 follows a mainstream

rather than a Southern contour and helps set up the contrast between Claire's own speech

and the Southern phrases that she and Liza begin to mimic.

Example 6.7 "And like there's sayings too"

1	Liza:	and then there's kind of like	
2		there's like Southern country	
3		like small town	
4	Claire:	like Providence	
5		and like there's sayings **too**	*too*: [tu] fronted with Southern contours as [tʉ]
6		what are like some sayings that people say	
7		like "hey yall:" and	*yall*: Southern address term
8	Liza:	oh definitely "yall"	*yall*: Southern address term
9	Claire:	{ "gone fishin" }	*fishing*: [fɪʃɪŋ] with nasal fronting as [fɪʃɪn]
10	Sara:	((laughter))	
11	Claire:	((laughter))	
12	Liza:	{ "hey bo" }	*bo*: Southern male address term
13	Claire:	{ "them stink bugs" } ((laughing))	*them*: demonstrative adjective
			stink: [stɪnk] lowered as [stænk]
14	Liza:	yeah my brother	
15		you should interview him	
16		he is like the most Southern person I've ever met	

In introducing the topic of people who are more Southern than herself and Liza,

those who are "country" or "small town," Claire uses the mainstream fronted /u/, seen in

Figure 6.17 with its steadily falling F2, and refrains from aligning with the surrounding

content, specifically, these undesirable types of Southern identities, ways of sounding

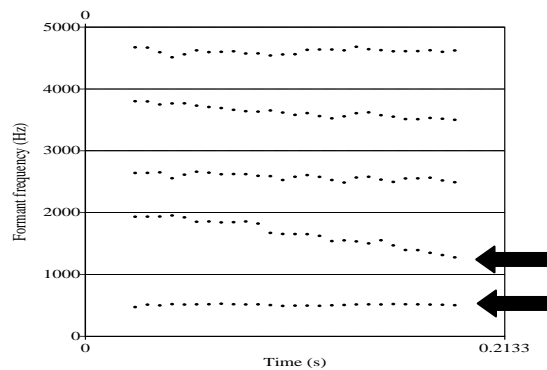Southern, and an example of a very Southern person, Dave Clarke.

Figure 6.17. Claire's "too," Example 6.7

The positioning of Claire's use of this non-Southern fronted /u/ followed by her and Liza's voicing of Southern phrases sets up a contrast in both content and form between the girls and the people they mimic, those who sound and act Southern, including rural Southerners as well as Dave. Even if the differences between the Southern and non-Southern fronted /u/ may not have been readily perceptible in all contexts, Claire seemed to use these different fronted /u/ realizations to correspond with social meanings, in terms of aligning with particular types of Southern identities or refraining from aligning with them.

6.3.4. Discussion of /u/

Both Claire and Julie fronted /u/ categorically in non-pre-lateral environments, showing that the non-fronted realization of /u/ seemed to be absent in their local community. This small data set of the sub-phonemic differences between particular realizations of fronted /u/ provides illustrations of how these individuals may exploit the meanings of this multivalent vowel feature. Specifically, Julie categorically used the mainstream diphthongal pronunciation of /u/ and avoided the Southern pronunciation,

reflecting her disaligned, or at least neutral, stance toward Southern identity. Meanwhile, Claire produced both Southern and mainstream /u/ vowels, and these realizations seemed to correspond to Claire's alignment with Southern identity in particular moments, either in general or as specifically not "Southern country."

6.4. Discussion

In this chapter, I have explored how individuals who belong to the same local community may use regional linguistic features to various ends. On one hand, in contexts that were unmarked regionally, Claire and Julie used the vowel /ai/ quantitatively differently, with Claire more likely than Julie to pronounce /ai/ as glide-weakened. On the other hand, they appeared to use the same rates of /u/ fronting, categorically realizing /u/ as fronted except in pre-lateral environments. At the same time, as my qualitative analysis has shown, in moments where regional identity was highlighted, these two different vowels—/ai/ exclusively Southern in meaning and /u/ potentially Southern or supra-regional in meaning—were available to be exploited for the same purposes: to align oneself with a preppy Southern identity or to distance oneself from a redneck Southern identity like that embodied by Dave Clarke. Despite any differences that may have existed in each girl's linguistic upbringing at home, for example as the result of having local or non-local parents, Claire and Julie's self-identification and implicit attitudes toward the South were certainly important factors in distinguishing their own identities as Southern. That is, these girls' stances toward different types of Southern identities were conveyed through both the content and the form of their utterances.

This analysis reveals that these two linguistic features could be used as socially meaningful linguistic resources regardless of their differing degrees of cultural salience.

Since glide-weakened /ai/ is a saliently stereotypical feature of Southern language, it is not surprising that Claire and Julie used it to mock others as sounding Southern. But they also used it to construct their identities as preppy Southern girls although they did so from different footings (Goffman 1981). While Julie used glide-weakened /ai/ to stylize her speech as a Southern girl when recollecting a particular past moment, Claire's use was presented as part of her non-stylized speech and was conditioned less by changes in footing than by context. Additionally, fronted /u/ did not seem to occupy the same status as glide-weakened /ai/ in terms of cultural salience, for example neither being stylized to express Southern identities nor warranting metacommentary. However, Claire's shifts between Southern and mainstream fronted realizations seemed to correspond with different regional affiliations indexed by these /u/ variants. Specifically, Southern realizations could be used to claim Claire's own regional identity and non-Southern realizations could distance her from Southerners like Dave. These patterns of use highlight the fact that Claire and Julie, as members of a small local community, relied on the same ideologies about the social meanings of Southern language, even when their individual linguistic practices differed.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I describe the general patterns that emerged in my analyses of the ways Southern language and identities were discussed as well as enacted by YLSM members, and I return to the main questions that motivated my research, specifically about the social construction of Southern identity and the regional indexical meanings of linguistic resources, and then discuss some contributions and limitations of this study.

7.1. How is Southern identity defined?

Throughout my fieldwork, it became clear that it was often problematic for YLSM members to claim a Southern identity, in part because the label "Southern" encompassed a number of different social groups within a large heterogeneous region. The various types of people who could be called "Southern" were stigmatized in different ways, according to both locally and widely circulating stereotypes of Southerners and Southern language use. When YLSM members were asked to define or explain Southern identity directly—as well as when they referenced Southern identity indirectly in interactions—they tended to divide this regional category according to binary distinctions, deflecting social stigma onto other Southerners rather than themselves.

7.1.1. The stigma of Southern identity

I show in various chapters that being seen as Southern, and in particular being seen as epitomizing Southern identity, came with corresponding risks. Thus, YLSM members defined Southern identity in various ways to mitigate the social and linguistic

stigma associated with it. In Chapter 4, I illustrated how YLSM members' ideologies did reproduce the stigma associated with Southern identity and Southern language by disparaging the use of certain Southern language forms, specifically Southern phonology. Meanwhile, they also praised the use of other Southern language practices for having positive value, citing those practices that expressed stances of Southern politeness. This distinction drew not only on language use but also coincided with social distinctions: speakers who were polite represented an acceptable type of Southern identity as preppy Southerners while those who were accented were seen as rural and unrefined.

In Chapter 5, I discussed how YLSM members talked about the stigma associated with a stereotypical lower-class Southern identity, specifically in reference to regional masculinity. Describing Dave Clarke and his redneck Southern masculinity, YLSM girls reproduced the stereotypical associations between Southern identity and socioeconomic class, linking regional identity with lower-class status and nonstandard linguistic practices. The extremity of Dave's Southern identity became risky: by embodying a lower-class redneck identity, he was subject to some of the stigma against this social type, particularly against his use of nonstandard linguistic forms. At the same time, when girls described Russell Whitson's regional identity as "the preppiest of the preppy" (Example 5.4), they privileged his upper-class status more than the regional or lower-class displays of masculinity that they did for Dave. In being described as the epitome of a preppy Southern boy, Russell faced a different risk, not of linguistic stigma, but of stigma for not embodying a hegemonic image of masculinity. Being preppy and upper-class seemed to call his gender identity into question: while Dave embodied redneck

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Southern identity and its accompanying hyper-masculinity, Russell's economically privileged Southern identity potentially became too feminine.

Across my analyses, the risk of being heard as particular types of Southerners was manifest in various moments in which YLSM members mocked others as sounding Southern in order to distance themselves from that perception. In Chapter 4 (Example 4.6), Lydia and Claire mocked the accents of cheerleaders from small-town high schools, differentiating themselves from the linguistic styles and Southern identities of those rural girls. Similarly, Charlotte, Julie, and Claire mocked Dave's use of Southern language in order to characterize him as a redneck Southern boy and to highlight various dissimilarities between themselves and Dave both socially and linguistically (Examples 5.1, 5.2, 6.3, and 6.4).

7.1.2. The relationality of Southern types

In addressing how YLSM members dealt with the potential stigma of being and sounding Southern, I show that Southern identities were defined relationally (Bucholtz & Hall 2005), with YLSM members constructing their own preppy identities based on both who they were and who they were not. Different types of Southern identities were defined in opposition to each other, in terms of both interregional distinctions across Southern and non-Southern identities and intraregional distinctions between various types of Southerners; each of these different social types was judged according to its positive or negative value.

Two salient dichotomies emerged, each intersecting with gender, race, and class in different ways: first, preppy and redneck Southerners, or regional types distinguished by class and sometimes gender; and second, Southern and not-so-Southern preppy girls,

or classed-and-gendered types distinguished by regional orientation. The first of these contrasts emerged in numerous ways. In Chapter 4, YLSM members' ideologies of Southern language use were mapped onto the distinction between preppy and rural Southerners. The widely acknowledged linguistic perceptions of Southern speakers as both friendly and incorrect were assigned respectively to preppy and rural social types and their associated ways of speaking. By defining the language practices of others as accented and ignorant compared with the polite and charming language practices of preppy Southerners like themselves, YLSM members simultaneously reproduced the stigma of Southern language, specifically in terms of phonological forms, and erased that same linguistic stigma for preppy Southerners by calling attention instead to the positive value of Southern language functions.

The same distinction between preppy and non-preppy Southerners also came up in discussions of Southern boys: the two boys that YLSM members described as epitomizing Southern identity were each a preppy boy and a redneck. The distinction between preppy and redneck masculinity involved oppositions in social dimensions such as gender, engaging in feminine or hyper-masculine practices, and socioeconomic class, cultivating an upper- or lower-class identity. These social distinctions correlated with the boys' perceived language use: sounding markedly Southern or adhering to unmarked local standards.

In Chapter 6, these two dichotomies emerged simultaneously: first, Southern girls compared to redneck Southerners like Dave, and, second, Claire and Julie as different types of girls, Southern or not-so-Southern preppy girls. The first distinction arose in moments of linguistic stylization: both Claire and Julie, who considered themselves

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different types of Southern girls, mocked the speech of their friend Dave, whom they constructed as representing a different type of Southern identity as a lower-class and linguistically nonstandard redneck. The second distinction drew on the personal identities of Claire and Julie, who considered themselves Southern either culturally or primarily by location, and was manifested both in self-defined regional affiliations and in these girls' use of two vowels, glide-weakened /ai/ and fronted /u/, both phonological features typically seen as Southern.

7.2. What counts as a Southern linguistic feature?

This dissertation is based on the premise that language features are not viewed as having fixed or isolated social meanings. Many studies of the language of the U.S. South take social meaning for granted, simply associating regional indexical value with the geographic location of speakers. However, this dissertation attends to the ways language practices were linked with multiple intersecting social meanings when they were associated with particular Southern types in interactions, and it attends to the ideologies of YLSM members that correlated various aspects of Southern language—its functions and its forms—with these different types of Southern identities.

7.2.1. Indexical meaning of Southern language

Viewing indexical values as emergent through language practice and as a result of language ideology, this dissertation highlights the flexible and culturally grounded nature of language's social meanings. Through stylization, YLSM members associated linguistic forms—such as glide-weakened /ai/, the second person plural pronoun "yall," and the demonstrative adjective "them"—with various types of Southerners. Moments of imitation provide a way to elicit speakers' attitudes toward linguistic variables which may

be socially meaningful but not salient enough to warrant explicit metacommentary (Niedzielski & Preston 2003). For example, YLSM members mocked small-town cheerleaders by drawing on markedly Southern phonological features, and through the content as well as the form of their talk about these cheerleaders, they constructed them as an unrefined, socially ignorant Southern type (Example 4.6). One of the most often imitated individuals in the YLSM community was Dave Clarke, whose identity as a hyper-Southern, hyper-masculine redneck was articulated on numerous occasions. Across different conversations in which Dave was mocked for being a redneck, girls stylized various aspects of Southern language as part of his persona, including glide-weakened /ai/, the lowering of [ei] as [ai], and demonstrative "them."

By examining interactions in which linguistic features were linked with social types, this dissertation also argues that social meanings are not unitary, pointing either to a single demographic dimension, such as geography or gender, or to a single social attribute, such as friendliness or incorrectness. While these are productive ways to illuminate various individual dimensions of social meanings, my analysis shows that YLSM members used language practices in such a way that drew on and constructed multiple social meanings and attributes at once. This observation motivated my analysis of the social types, as whole models of personhood (Agha 2007a), that YLSM members referenced while defining their own identities within the South. By referencing social types like preppy Southerners and redneck Southerners, YLSM members highlighted complex identities that exist at the intersection of multiple social dimensions, such as region, gender, and class. These different social types were associated with the use of

particular Southern language practices and were differently assigned the negative value

of the widely recognized linguistic and social stigma of being Southern.

In Chapter 6, I highlighted the emergent social meanings of two specific linguistic

resources, glide-weakened /ai/ and fronted /u/. Their rates and contexts of use by YLSM

members Claire and Julie reflected the local value of these two vowels as regional

linguistic features. While glide-weakened /ai/ was seen as an index of regional identity

widely as well as locally, the case of fronted /u/ presented a nuanced picture of emerging

indexical meanings. As both a feature of Southern language and of other regional

varieties of American English, fronted /u/ has a multivalent social meaning as either a

Southern feature or an non-regional one. My analysis suggested that fronted /u/ remained

potentially indexical of both Southern and non-Southern identities, and particular

indexical meanings could be identified through close attention to context, recurring

associations, and the co-occurrence of linguistic features.

7.2.2. Ideologies of Southern language

My analysis of the regional meanings of so-called Southern linguistic features

relies on participants' underlying ideologies of Southern language, both popular and local

YLSM ideologies. YLSM members defined Southern language and its social values

according to widely circulating stereotypes of Southerners and Southern speech. For

example, in Chapter 4, I illustrated how YLSM members conceived of Southern language

in terms of its multivalent perceptions as both friendly and incorrect. Informed by these

well-known perceptions of Southern speakers, YLSM members' ideologies of the use of

Southern language further mapped these qualities onto different aspects of Southern

language and different types of Southern people in a fractally recursive pattern (Irvine &

Gal 2000), one which reproduced the linguistic and stigmatized distinctions that existed at a national level onto a local level. Thus, preppy Southerners like YLSM members were seen as employing the functions of Southern language to construct their identities as friendly while unrefined and redneck Southerners who used the forms of Southern language were heard as incorrect.

In their construction of Dave as a stereotypical hyper-masculine Southern redneck, YLSM members reproduced the widely circulating linguistic stigma against this type. Yet they also suggested, as in the case of Russell, that Southern masculinity could alternatively be enacted by the locally defined preppy Southern social type that was seen as unmarked linguistically according to local standards. Finally, in Chapter 6, I demonstrated how linguistic resources, such as in the stylization of other Southern voices, could be used to evoke widely and locally circulating stereotypes of Southern identities, both those typified by Dave specifically and those of different types of preppy Southern girls as well.

The social meanings of linguistic practices and features among the YLSM community were informed by the local cultural setting; they emerged not only in single linguistic interactions but also through their co-occurrence across members of the same community and various interactions within the community. For example, the metacommentary examined in Chapter 4 demonstrated co-occurring themes: YLSM members often constructed their identities by alluding to Southern charm and Southern politeness while they mitigated their own perceived use of Southern linguistic forms and accents. Additionally, the analysis in Chapter 6 explored how individual identities were enacted in reference to locally relevant types: Claire consistently constructed her identity

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as a preppy Southern girl, while Julie defined her own identity by maintaining some degree of distance from this regional type.

7.3. Contributions and limitations

7.3.1. Locating identity and ideology in language

This dissertation contributes to the ways that sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists engage with the social meanings of language variation, in particular, following studies in sociocultural linguistics (cf. Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Bucholtz 2011) that explore the relationship between linguistic forms, social meanings, and language ideologies in closely examined cultural settings. This dissertation provides an analysis of language use and ideologies that were informed by my locally grounded perspective and ethnographic insights combined with attention to widely circulating societal attitudes about local Southern social identities. I realize that, as in ethnographic studies, my presence as a researcher in the YLSM community and my own positionality as a member of the local community necessarily influenced the interactions and linguistic practices that I observed, and, therefore, also influenced my analysis of them (Philips 2013). Rather than understand such researcher effects as a problem, my insider status allowed me to observe relationships between language use and social types in earnest commentary from YLSM members in ways that might not have been available to outsiders.

An analysis of metalinguistic commentary reveals how speakers make sense of the language variation around them, even if such comments about language often do not provide accurate descriptions of speakers' own language practices. Particularly in combination with moments of stylized language use, metacommentary, whether directly elicited and not, addresses how speakers position themselves relative to their social

worlds through language and provides evidence for their underlying attitudes and ideologies toward different language practices.

This dissertation also adds to linguists' understanding of linguistic variation. Taking an interactional approach, my analyses highlight the ways that indexical meanings emerge through the use of particular linguistic resources as well as the ideologies of the speakers who used those resources. My ethnographic perspective informed my choice to treat the speech that emerged in informal group interviews as representative of casual conversation in non-recorded settings, a choice that was potentially problematic. However, having observed both in and out of interview settings similar language use and comments on Southern identity from the two individuals whose speech was closely analyzed in Chapter 6, I considered the effect of the recording situation to be minimal.

The types of indexical meanings that emerged in this dissertation were complex rather than singular and alluded to numerous social dimensions and attitudes toward the language associated with certain types of speakers. This study examines the social meanings of linguistic features as relevant to whole social types, adding to the previous literature on personas (Eckert 2008a) and models of personhood (Agha 2007a). While this study focuses on a small subset of the Southern population, the specific social identities and indexical meanings discussed in this dissertation may not be generalizable to other Southerners; however, the processes through which social meanings emerge, in interactions and as the result of popular and local ideologies of language and identity, may inform future studies in other communities of speakers who face multiple conflicting linguistic standards.

7.3.2. Redefining Southern identity

While this study provides a detailed and ethnographically informed analysis of the language practices and ideologies of only a single community of Southerners at a particular fixed time in their lives, it contributes to our understanding of the diverse populations within this complex region. The members of the Young Ladies' Society of Midway may not be the types of speakers traditionally studied by linguists seeking to understand regional variation. However, YLSM members, as white, economically privileged teenage girls in the urban South, provide a new and needed perspective on the role of Southern language and identity in the region more generally.

In particular, this dissertation suggests specific ways in which the traditionally defined white Southern types (cf. Reed 1986) were insufficient to capture the nuances of modern life in the U.S. South. YLSM members constructed their Southern identities, and those of others, in reference to existing stereotypes, and they did in part reproduce those, such as the redneck social type. However, they also defined Southern identities according to local standards which ran counter to the widely circulating attitudes about Southerners that perpetuate negative stereotypes. While YLSM members defined local Southern identities primarily in terms of socioeconomic class, gender, and language use, they typically erased racial identities from the Southern landscape, a significant fact that certainly warrants further exploration, particularly in the relationship between talking about region and avoiding talk about race.

This study also contributes to our understanding of the identities of female youth in the United States generally. While the particular construction of preppy and unrefined types of Southern identities may be specific to individuals in the South, these identity practices, such as the relationality of identity and the deflection of stigma onto others, are

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likely ways that teenage girls in other communities interact with stereotypical models of

identity as they seek to define themselves as gendered and classed individuals.

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