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Special issue:
The Ethnopragmatics of Australian English

Edited by Michael Haugh and Susana Eisenchlas
School of Languages and Linguistics
Griffith University
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Introduction

MICHAEL HAUGH AND SUSANA EISENCHLAS*

We are delighted to introduce the first issue of Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication. This publication features select work by undergraduate and Honours students in the School of Languages and Linguistics at Griffith University enrolled in courses on pragmatics and intercultural communication. We believe that this work deserves a wider audience as it involves original data collection and analysis. Indeed, many of these topics have received scant attention in the literature so far.

In this issue, the focus is on the ethnopragmatics of Australian English, in particular, cultural keywords, speech patterns and norms of interaction. Although English is the most widely studied second/foreign language in the world and is regularly used by more than a billion speakers, the study of differences in the ways varieties of English are used is only just emerging. This issue makes a modest contribution in that direction.

We hope this issue will stimulate further work in these emerging areas of inquiry and will also mark the development of this new area of research strength at Griffith.

Michael Haugh and Susana Eisenchlas
April 2008

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Some lexical variations of Australian Aboriginal English

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Abstract

This report explores the variety of English known as Australian Aboriginal English. It analyses some lexical variations uncovered through studying realistic Aboriginal English language usage from two films; Blackfellas and Rabbit Proof Fence. It confirms that Aboriginal English has its own grammatical and semantic systems enabling its users to express things that can be expressed with Standard English alongside things that can not be expressed with Standard English. The report points out that for many Aboriginal Australians, Aboriginal English is a link to tradition and community and that it is often used as a solidarity marker and an expression of Aboriginal identity. It shows that almost all lexical variations in Aboriginal English mark solidarity and that Aboriginal English is a symbol of cultural maintenance. It explains that for many Aboriginal people, gestures and vocal articulations are interchangeable within Aboriginal English. The report describes how Aboriginal English has arisen. It posits that, due to either linguistic imperialism or the unwillingness of the British colonisers to adopt any of the 250 Aboriginal languages or approximately 600 dialects as a common language, the indigenous population over generations grafted their grammatical and semantic systems onto British Standard English.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the variety of English known as Australian Aboriginal English. Aboriginal Englishes are the varieties, or more technically, dialects of English spoken by Aboriginal people throughout Australia (Eades 1995). Although Aboriginal English is to some degree similar to varieties of Australian English, there are clear differences, as this paper shows. The analysis in this report covers some of the lexical variations of Aboriginal English from the films, Blackfellas (1993: Ricketson: Australia) and Rabbit Proof Fence (2002: Noyce: Australia). Both films adequately represent realistic Aboriginal English language usage and were chosen as the elicitation of substantial natural language examples were beyond the time constraints and the scope of this project. According to Williams (1988), “Aboriginal English varies across the [country] due to the people, their culture and communities.” Hawkins (cf. Groome 1995) states that “Aboriginal English has its own distinctive grammatical and semantic systems [and] enables its speakers to express anything that can be expressed in Standard English. Its speakers also use it to express ideas that are not often expressed in Standard English [and must] be seen as different [but] not deficient” (p.79). This
analysis of lexical variation indicates that, for many, Aboriginal English is a connection to tradition or is used to mark solidarity within a particular linguistic community. It can be a subtle but powerful medium for the expression of Aboriginal identity (Eades 1995).

Prior to the British invasion of Australia the Aboriginal people had some 250 different languages (e.g., Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Jaggarra) with approximately 600 dialects. As the British were unwilling to learn any of the Aboriginal languages, as is often the case when an invading force takes over a country (i.e., linguistic imperialism), it was left to the Aboriginal people to bridge the communication gap, first with a basic Pidgin English and later with what is now known as Aboriginal English (Eades 1995).

Aboriginal English developed over a few generations when the Pidgin English that was used to communicate with the British was used to communicate across the various Aboriginal language groups in Australia. This linguistic development gave rise to Aboriginal dialects of English, hence Aboriginal English, throughout most of Australia, including two Creole languages in the far north of Australia (Eades: 1995). In other regions where no Pidgin languages were used, Aboriginal people turned Standard English into Aboriginal English by overlaying their accents, grammar and ways of speaking and their lexical selections on the language. The next section examines some of the lexical variations of Aboriginal English.

2. Unna as a solidarity marker

In example (1), the lexical variation focus is on the word ‘blackfellas’ (from the title of the film) and the word ‘unna’ in lines 2, 4, and 8. ‘Blackfellas’ is the title of a film portraying contemporary Aboriginal life. The function of a film title is that of a headline, to attract attention and to inform. The Aboriginal English title ‘Blackfellas’ varies from Standard English in three ways: (i) spelling; (ii) structure; and (iii) phonetics. ‘Blackfellas’ in Aboriginal English is spelt ‘Blackfellas’ and in Standard English is spelt ‘Black fellows’. The Aboriginal English form is one word while the Standard English is two words. Phonetically, the Aboriginal English version requires less effort in term of articulation. Therefore, for these reasons, ‘Blackfellas’ is a lexical variation, not only used for the title of a film but also used by Aboriginal people as an Aboriginal word to refer to one another and to mark solidarity.

(1) Excerpt from ‘Blackfellas’
1 Pretty Boy: I’m sorry bro
2 Dougy: yesterdays history (pause) unna
3 Pretty Boy: I was gunna get ya some roses bro but I
4 decided to get ya the whole fucken bush unna ha ha ha.
5 Dougy: fuck you Boy.
6  [Brief physical exchange]
7  Dougy:  for ever and ever.
8  Pretty Boy:  brothers for ever and ever unna

In example (1), ‘unna’ is repeated three times by the speakers, who are engaged in a discourse that is basically an apology and the acceptance of that apology. The utterances are produced at the end of sentences without delay or hesitation. In this example, ‘unna’ appears to act as a grammatical tag, and therefore a small unit of talk tagged onto the end of a sentence to elicit agreement from the listener. While it may not be possible to arrive at a precise meaning or synonym of this lexical variation, one might argue that ‘unna’ roughly translates, some of the time, as ‘isn’t it so?’ or ‘isn’t that right?’ Further, in Example (1), ‘unna’ performs the role of a marker of solidarity, which Bales (1950: 78–80) claims is a “basic dimension of social relations within a group.”

3. Lexical variation

In line 8 of example (2) and line 6 of example (3) the lexical variation focus is on the words ‘deadliest’ (the superlative form of ‘deadly’) and ‘deadly’ respectively. In line 8 below, ‘deadliest’ is used to show that something is very impressive or very good. In this example, Pretty Boy is an extremely good ‘marker’ (a football term for one who catches the ball on the full), and being the superlative form of ‘deadly’ it implies that Pretty Boy is the best ‘marker’. A further example of this variation occurs in line 6 from example (3), when Polly expresses that a dress she is wearing is ‘deadly’. Note also the previously described use of unna, here directly after ‘deadly’. In this example ‘unna’ is used to mean ‘isn’t it so?’ or ‘isn’t that right?’ It also adds weight to the ‘deadliness’ of Polly’s dress. Some meanings or synonyms for ‘deadly’ in Standard English include lethal, toxic and fatal etc. Therefore, its usage in Aboriginal English has different meanings for the word ‘deadly’ from those of Standard English. However, according to Eades (1995), “it appears that this is a word which is spreading from Aboriginal English into general Australian usage, especially among young people.”

(2) Excerpt from ‘Blackfellas’
1  Pretty Boy:  and another thing if it’s a boy calling him after you
2  Floyd Douglass
3  Davy unna
4  Dougy:  what are ya gunna do about money.
5  Pretty Boy:  well if the worst comes to the worst, I’ll go
6  and play football, that coaches been on my back for 18
7  months now to go and play for his team, reckons
8  I’m the longest kicker and the deadliest marker hes ever
9  seen ay.
(3) Excerpt from ‘Blackfellas’

1 Polly: ya said we was goin to the movies
2 Douggy: sorry Polly, Floyd picked me up but...
3 Polly: oh fuck Floyd and fuck you to Doug, you and
4 he might as well be boy friends for yuz both care about
5 ya womens (pause) (softly) I got dressed up a every thing
6 for ya (pause) Val got me this dress, **deadly** unna
7 Douggy: **deadly** (pause) we’ll go to the picture another night ok
8 Polly: (nods head)

In example (4) (line 3) the lexical variation focus is on the word ‘charge’. In the context of inviting Douggy to come and have a discussion, Pretty Boy states, ‘we’re gonna have a bit of a charge, and a talk’. In Aboriginal English a ‘charge’ refers to drinking alcohol. It is only related to the Standard English definition in the sense of ‘to charge’ like a battery, literally to keep filling it up until it’s full, as this is what you do when you ‘charge on’: you keep drinking until you are full. Some non-related meanings and synonyms in Standard English include accuse, incriminate and to lay the blame on someone.

(4) Excerpt from ‘Blackfellas’

1 Pretty Boy: Right o Doug right o lets go home and talk about it,
2 Vals up playing cards tonight with Nana. So we’re gunna
3 have a bit of a **charge**, and a talk.
4 Douggy: (shakes head).

In example (5) (line 5) the lexical variation focus is on the word ‘digga’. In this example Douggy is explaining to Pretty Boy the Standard English animal husbandry expression pertaining to the mating of live stock ‘to put to’ or ‘to put over’. While ‘digga’ has different meanings in Standard English and in particular Standard Australian English (e.g., a solder, possibly an ANZAC), the Aboriginal English meaning here refers to sexual intercourse. Therefore, this Aboriginal English expression, not used in Standard English, is definitely a form of lexical variation.

(5) Excerpt from ‘Blackfellas’

1 Douggy: ya know what Pretty boy, Tony Fowleys gunna give me a
2 couple of old mares with good blood lines, I can put em to
3 Serenity Bill.
4 Pretty boy: put em to?
5 Douggy: yeh ya know (razes arm at 45% angle and jiggles fist) **digga**
6 Pretty boy: oooah, you mean that Serenity Bill gets to
7 put it to them old mares unna. (laughter)
4. Gesture and lexical variation

In example (6), the lexical variation focus is on the word, or in this example, gestures, in lines 4, 6, 8 and 17. In this example gesture will be treated as an utterance. This is due to the use of gesture in many Aboriginal languages and its transfer to Aboriginal English. According to Caruso (1997), Aboriginal English features “aspects including the use of silence, eye contact and body language.” In the film Rabbit Proof Fence (line 3), Molly gestures with a hand, to two approaching Aboriginal Men ‘can you give us some food’. A short exchange of gestures follows between Molly and one of the Men, resulting in the exchange of food to Molly and her sisters. This is a lexical variation of Aboriginal English not seen, at least to this degree, in Standard (Australian) English.

In line 12 the lexical variation focus is on the word ‘country’. According to Eades (1995), “the word country which refers to land generally, […] also has a more specific meaning of place of belonging” (italics added). The Standard English equivalent refers to state, nation state and realm etc. The use of ‘country’ in Aboriginal English can also mean a person from your ‘country’ and can be exchanged with ‘brother’ when greeting a person from one’s place of origin. It is another example of a solidarity marker.

(6) Excerpt from ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’
1 (girls hiding see two men with roo over shoulder
2 approach)
3 Dasiy: ask em ask em Molly ask em for something to eat.
4 Molly: (steps out from hiding and gestures with hand to the men)
5 Can you give us some food.
6 Man: (the man carrying the roo gestures back with his hand)
7 Who else is there.
8 Molly: (gestures to the other two girls in hiding) come out and
9 show yourselves.
10 Man: hey you’re from that More River place ay.
11 Youngest girl: we goin home.
12 Man: where your country.
13 Molly: Jigalong.
14 Man: Jigalong, proper long way
15 (hands Molly a packet of matches)
16 you know what your doin.
17 Molly: (nods head) yes.

5. Conclusion

An exhaustive analysis of this topic would require a holistic approach beyond the scope of this report. However, the exploration of other levels of variation such as
spelling, structure, phonetics and body language/gesture have been employed to gain a deeper insight of lexical variation in Aboriginal English. In all, the lexical variations of eight items have been analysed and explained. It has been shown that Aboriginal English is technically a dialect of English spoken by Aboriginal people throughout Australia. That said, Eades (1995) observes that it would be ‘an oversimplification to speak of one dialect of Aboriginal English, just as it would be to speak of one dialect of British English’. Further, it has been shown that almost all lexical variations in Aboriginal English mark solidarity and, according to Malcolm (2001 p.217), Aboriginal English ‘is a symbol of cultural maintenance, [and is] the adopted code of a surviving culture’.

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References
‘Bogan’: Polite or not?
Cultural implications of a term in Australian slang

KAY FRANCES BARTOLO*

Abstract

Although changes in the usage of words in English are emerging through globalisation and travel, Australian slang has kept its strong ties to Australian culture. The main aim of this research was to look at the term ‘bogan’, whether it is used in a derogatory way in Australian English, and what effects culture can have on its use and acceptance. Research was conducted using a small corpus built of Australian slang and data taken from ethno-pragmatic interviews with Australian-born native speakers of English. It was concluded from the research that the term can be used both negatively, as a negative comment or impolite projection of a social identity onto a person who does not identify themselves within that classification by the older generation, and positively, as a sign of solidarity or a compliment amongst members of the same in-group by the younger generation. The factors found to affect the result of the use of this term are the cultural stereotype that the user attaches to the meaning and the cultural understanding of the listener.

1. Introduction

Australian slang is distinct from that used in many other varieties of English (with the exception of New Zealand slang, with which it shares many of the same slang terms). Although with the expansion of internationalism and international travel the slang of many other English cultures has influenced the slang used by the Australian population, strong ties still remain to Australian colloquialisms. Slang can be used as a way to build personal, social or national identity and to create solidarity within an in-group, which is evident in the use of Australian slang amongst its users (Laugesen 2003).

The use of Australian slang in other countries and therefore with people of other cultures can be either completely unrecognisable or strongly misinterpreted as being insults or even swearing (Menner 1946: 120). For example, a woman was recently questioned by the American police after she used the term ‘fair dinkum’ on an American airline, the term being assumed to be swearing (Rolfe 2007). This misunderstanding is an excellent example of the ways in which slang can carry strong cultural values which influence the meaning understood by the listener.

During World War I, a glossary of ‘slanguage’ used by the Australian soldiers was created to take a snapshot in history of Australian language and slang (Laugesen 2003). The words used by soldiers were written down with very
brief definitions and at times possible origins. One entry that is relevant to this research is the term ‘bastard’. This term originated as a derogatory title for a child born to unmarried parents, whereas the entry in the ‘slanguage’ glossary describes it as “a term of endearment” (Laugesen 2007). It can therefore be seen that a word with originally negative connotations can be used in a positive way if used as a type of slang.

2. Methodology: Ethnopragmatic analysis

A small corpus was built of Australian English slang from internet resources, mainly online newspapers and comments made about these articles from archives of the past five years, then samples of approximately one sentence were taken that included the term ‘bogan’. A sample of sentences that contained the word ‘bogan’ was selected from the corpus (see Appendix 1).

In addition, three ethno pragmatic interviews were conducted with Australian English speakers to support the written data. These interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The ethno-pragmatic interviews were conducted with four Anglo-Saxon Australian-born people of varying ages from 18-52 years old who were asked a number of questions regarding their understanding and personal use of the word ‘bogan’ (see full transcriptions of the interviews in Appendix 2).

The Natural Semantic Meta-language was then used to create a semantic explication of ‘bogan’ in AusE. The study focused mainly on looking at whether this term is used in a derogatory way and what effects the cultural values of the term have on (im)politeness.

The analysis of each section of the data was conducted separately in order to appreciate the different uses and implications of the term in its separate environments.

3. Discussion of print data

By looking at the data collected from the interviews and online dictionary entries, the term describes a person of unspecified gender who can be associated with the following list of personal qualities: enthusiasm for cars and ‘hooning’; drinking alcohol (specifically a cheap beer like Victorian Bitter); a lack of education; dirty personal hygiene habits; and low dress standards such as thongs, flannel shirts, wife beaters (singlets); smoking; lack of money; loud rock or heavy metal music; the ‘mullet’ hair style; petty crime; free-loading; reckless behaviour; and Australia.

From the analysis carried out on the corpus and sample, it has been concluded that the term ‘bogan’ is predominantly used as a gender-neutral noun (www.bogan.com.au). The use of the term ‘bogan’ in any other linguistic form is rare and possibly due to linguistic and social evolution. ‘Bogan’ has circulated in
mainstream society since the 1980s and some believe that it has its origins on the Bogan River District of Western NSW, though this link can not be confirmed (www.bogan.com.au). The current understanding of the term has evolved only slightly from its original meaning, derived in the eighties, possibly due to being strongly embedded in Australian society.

Regarding the question of whether the term is used to cause offence, the majority of the printed data seems to lean towards the use of the word as an insult. Most of the written data focused on the offensive side of the use of the word ‘bogan’ and how the term can be associated with derogatory taunts about Australian culture being that of unintelligent people with little to no personal pride. However, this negative use cannot be concluded as being the only version, since there are a few examples in the written texts that indicate a positive attitude towards those who are stereotyped as being ‘bogans’. This is shown by the discussion of ‘pride’ being associated with the term and supporting the traditional ‘Aussie’ culture in articles like that by Michelle Griffin in The Australian of 15 July 2002. Griffin discusses the fact that ‘bogan’ is no longer just being used as an insult, but is in fact a way to identify with the ‘Aussie’ culture that many Anglo-Saxon Australian citizens are so proud of.

This opinion conflicts with the embarrassment of the ‘bogan’ persona as described by Campbell (2006). She suggests that the celebrities described in the media as ‘bogans’ are a reason behind the negative assertion of the term rather than the common/public use of the word. This is supported by the use of the term ‘bogan’ to describe celebrities such as Shane Warne who have been shamed publicly for their infidelity and philandering, excessive alcohol consumption and other undesired habits (Symons 2005).

The term ‘bogan’ is associated with translations into North-American English of ‘trailer trash’ and British English ‘CHAV’S’ (Huynh 2007). This translation into the North-American English ‘trailer-trash’ is interesting since one of the articles relates the negative outlook of this word to a similar perspective on the term ‘bogan’. Another of the articles insists that ‘Australians have an affection for bogans that is not reflected in North America’s loathing of trailer trash’ (Huynh 2007). Therefore, it cannot be definitively said whether this word invokes a positive or a negative stereotype from analysis of the written data.

4. Discussion of interview data

The general understanding of the term ‘bogan’, as described by the interview participants, is that of a person with a lack of pride for their personal appearance, who is untidy and poorly dressed. The two older participants included having a lower than normal intellectual level as being an important mental characteristic of being a ‘bogan’, whereas the younger participant disagreed with this idea. She described a ‘bogan’ as being someone who ‘plays dumb’ but who is not actually unintelligent. However, this could be a biased opinion since she continues after
this comment to classify herself as a ‘bogan’ and therefore attempts to create a positive image of her now self-proclaimed in-group. Since the older participants have either explicitly or implicitly excluded themselves from the ‘bogan’ in-group, they distance themselves from the negative stereotype of this identity.

All of the participants supported the idea that the term is generally used by a younger speaker rather than a middle-aged or older speaker. However, once again, the youngest speaker had more to add on this point, saying that she would use the term with family and friends including with her maternal grandmother. She justifies this by saying that her grandma ‘is completely different though’, indicating that she does not classify her grandmother as a ‘typical’ grandmother. This shows that although she may use the term with her own grandmother, this is an exception to the social norm for the use of the term. This could indicate a meaning shift from one generation to the next. Since both of the older participants commented on the fact that they do not use it, and the younger participant does, this situation might arise with a term or phrase that was at one time derogatory but is in the present neutral or complimentary, as discussed in the introduction to this essay.

All interview participants had the same opinion that the word is generally not offensive. However, the older male participant said that he would question why a person would call him that, indicating slight offence of the word when the term is being directed towards him. This offence is created by the disagreement between the projection of the stereotype onto a person who does not identify with that stereotype. It is not that the stereotype itself is an offensive description; rather that the person who is being publicly classified as a ‘bogan’ does not appreciate being identified in a way that they do not classify themselves.

The youngest participant made the interesting comment that it is mainly offensive for females to be called a ‘bogan’ but that it can be taken as a compliment if it is directed towards a male. This can be understood by looking at the social ideology of men, that is that the term supports the tough or strong aspect of male psychology along with the belief that males should not care about their personal appearance. For a female to be identified with a term that has strong masculine connotations would be offensive if she did not see herself in that way.

5. Semantic explication of ‘bogan’

From the preceding analysis we can define the use of bogan in Australian English in the following manner using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage:

- this is a kind of person
- this person is not like me
- it is not bad if this person thinks I don’t like them
- this person can think like this:
  - I think it is not bad if someone thinks of me in a bad way
I don’t have to do anything to be good at this
I feel good because of this

6. Conclusion

‘Bogan’ is described as ‘a subculture’ or an ‘abstract idea that is expressed through culture’ so the word can be assumed to be explicitly linked to culture (Campbell 2006). The (im)politeness that can be incurred is therefore associated to the cultural ties that each individual user attaches to the term not the meaning of the word itself.

Therefore, it can be concluded from analysis of the data of this research that the term ‘bogan’ can be used as either a derogatory term or a compliment to create solidarity. The factor that determines this decision is whether the person who is being called a ‘bogan’ identifies with the cultural stereotype or not. If the person does not classify him or herself as a part of this in-group than offence can be taken whereas if the person sees him or herself as part of the in-group then the comment will be seen more like a compliment.

The term is most commonly used by the younger generation in today’s society. This can be attributed to the fact that the understanding or connotations of the word has changed since its original meaning. A person who belongs to an older generation views this word as an impolite projection of an identity onto a person who does not agree with the classification. However, a person of a younger generation is more likely to accept the use of this address as compliment to create solidarity amongst the members of the same in-group.

Research should be continued into the area of (im)politeness in Australian slang and simply Australian slang on its own since there is very little literature on these topics. The changing nature of the spoken language, in particular slang, means that if research is not continually conducted in this area, much of the information will be lost.

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References


Appendix 1: Samples of ‘bogan’ in Australian English

In New Zealand as in Australia, bogan is an insulting slang term for an unsophisticated lower-class yob - if the study is published in the United States it may have to include the translation ‘trailer trash’. (The Australian 2007)

But Mr Snell is happy to describe himself as a bogan, saying he loves heavy metal music - distinctive for its thick, loud, guitar-and-drums sound. (The Australian 2007)

‘The stereotype of a bogan is tight black jeans, a Metallica T-shirt, a mullet 12 or a shaved head and a love of beer and cars. I’d very proudly call myself a bogan,’ he said on Radio New Zealand today. (The Australian 2007)

G’DAY, keep your trackies on, chuck a sickie and jump in the ute, you bogan. (Conway 2006)

Aussies might still regard Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates as a geek, but surely he’s no bogan. (Conway, Nov 13, 2006)

‘Over here they are either bogan Crows supporters or bogan Port supporters.’ (Pearce in Quartermaine 2006)

‘I might get 30,000 dirty looks from the bogans here today, but I got one high five from another Freo fan so that made it worthwhile.’ (Pearce in Quartermaine 2006)

Warne receives regular ribbings from the Australian media for his bogan persona. His struggles with weight loss and cigarettes, the unsophisticated dietary habits, are all fodder for commentators who recoil at his uncouth habits. But Warney is the ultimate Aussie bloke: all brawn and few brains when it comes to controlling his appetites, plus a blinding addiction to blondes who are typically clones of his attractive wife. (Symons 2005)

‘They’re the same ones in English really, aren’t they?’ he says. ‘I know the word bogan, but it’s not really a swear word. There was bogan and there was another one …. Bevan? Bevan! Yeah, that’s the other one.’ (The Sunday 38 Mail 2007)

Jeff of Qld you don’t get the point. You’re an ignoramus. Get educated because you sound like bogan. (Whittaker 2007)

Perhaps there’s a little bogan in everyone (Campbell 2006)

Many Australians think they know exactly what a bogan is. Some say it’s a socio-economic class. Some say bogans are a subculture. And others say that tastes or pop-cultural references make someone a bogan. (Campbell 2006)
Ultimately, bogans are none of these things. Rather than being grounded in reality, bogan is an abstract idea that is expressed through culture. And when we talk about bogans, we’re really talking about national identity. (Campbell 2006)

Bogans pop up in the media and in the public imagination as figures that are both embarrassing and ‘un-Australian’, and instantly, recognisably ‘hyper-Australian’. (Campbell 2006)

It suits the political ideology of the bogan to declare certain tastes - and people – ‘lower class’, because that makes it their fault and not ours. (Campbell 2006)

Bogans don’t give a rats arse about style or substance. Too lazy to read reviews, yet too ignorant to appreciate style, if you see a Bogan with a decent phone it’s because they just mugged a Technosexual. If you keep watching, you’ll see them throw it in the bin because they can’t figure out the keylock. Bogan’s phone of choice; whatever’s on special at Cash Converters. (Turner 2007)

Will bogans decide the next election? (Huynh 2007)

Australians have an affection for bogans that is not reflected in North America’s loathing of trailer trash or the Pommie repugnance towards CHAVs (Council Housing and Violent). (Huynh 2007)

Arch-conservatives bemoan the fact that people no longer know their place and equate the bogan ascendance with the demise of civilisation and the erosion of old-fashioned values. (Huynh 2007)

At the same time, bogans have only scorn for the out-of-touch intellectuals who they view as being bereft of the ANZAC spirit and obsessed with the esoteric arts of others. (Huynh 2007)

Thank God for that! Half the time I don’t know what these half-literate bogan, bush pig expressions mean. They make us sound so cheap and uneducated. (Ferrer 2006)

I can not stand Australian sayings and bogan accents. Nothing worse, it does not take much more to speak correctly does it? leave it to the bogans to carry on the ‘tradition’ (Mark M 2006)

Nothing is sacred with Bogan Daz and his mate Macca encouraging punters to cross off ‘Keys to the Torana, 18’ or a ‘I thought she was legal, 15’ on their way to bingo glory. (The Penrith Press 2007)

All nations have their equivalent of the bogan, and Europe - for all its suave sophistication, is no exception. (Kent 2007)
Looking like Noddy in his little red car, the Euro **Bogan** takes enormous pride in his bad-ass Smart Car and takes umbride if you point and laugh because his speakers are bigger than his engine. (Kent 2007)

Although the moccasin-shod suburban hero has been off the cultural radar for the past decade while Australians flirted with imported subcultures, the **bogan** is BIT-back in town - and this time, people are embracing their inner **bogan**. (Griffin 2002)

From Russell Crowe demanding VB tinnies after the Oscars, to hairdressers reviving the mini mullet, the **bogan** is commanding newfound respect. (Griffin 2002)

But in the past couple of years, she’s seen a real resurgence in **bogan** pride. (Griffin 2002)

The word ‘**bogan**’ first appeared in surfing magazines in the early 80s as a derogatory term for the inland suburban outsiders who invaded the surfers’ patch. (Griffin 2002)

But it’s not always an insult anymore. Both Triple M and Triple J organised national **bogan** competitions in the past six months, and they’ve been flooded with entries from people proud to wave the flannelette flag. (Griffin 121 2002)

**Sources**


Appendix 2: Transcriptions of ethnopragmatic interviews

Interview with Australian female (45 years old), 21 October 2007
I = Interviewer
G = interviewee

I: Please describe to me the meaning of the term bogan in your own words
G: A boga::: n i:::s a::: (3.0) flannelette shirt wearing ugg boot (2.0) aah::: usually younger guy sort of under (2.0) from about oh 18 to 30 years old, um::: used to live in, someone who used to live in the Western suburbs of Sydney. Um::: They’re (3sec) They own (2.0) Holdens and::: old Holdens and Fords (1.0) Falcon Ute sort of things and:::
I: Are there any mental characteristics you associate with bogan?
G: (2.0) I associate a lower IQ than normal (laughter) um::: low socio-economic sort of (1.0) upbringing (2.0) um::
I: [Okay ]
G: [That’s] probably all.
I: Do you use the term yourself?
G: (1.0) Not a lot, no not very often at all
I: Um::: is that, do you think that’s because of your age.
G: [No, I just think that’s just]
I: [ Or do you think that’s just]
G: It’s just me and I don’t use that term (1.0) a lot
I: (2.0) Um::: is this term offensive?
G: (3.0) No I don’t think it can, it is, it depends on who, who::: like when it’s used. Like any term. Um, sometimes they’re offensive if they’re used in the wrong way. But (1.0) so many people refer to bogans in::: Australia that it’s almost a::: um::: (3.0) compliment to some people.
I: So (1.0) um::: would it be seen as offensive outside Australia? Or do you think it could be seen as offensive?
G: (2.0) They mightn’t know what it means (1.0) if they, if they knew what it sort of referred to then possibly people could think that it could be offensive.
I: Ah (1.0) Um::: Can you describe to me a situation when this term could be seen as impolite.
G: (3.0) Oh god um::: (3.0) If you used it in::: (3.0) upper society they’d probably take it as an insult (1.0) [At the]=
I: [so::]
G: =At the you know Spring Carnival races or something and, and you spoke about Lady or Lord So-and-So being a bogan then yes maybe they, they would take it as offensive.
I: So in like general socio-economic areas, in normal, well in average socio-economic areas it’d be ok to use it or?
G: I think most places they’d they’d accept it yes apart from the (2.0) the::: snobby-er people I’d say.
I: Ok, that’s it.
NB. Discussed later: there is no female bogan, just the girl that is with the bogan.

Interview with Australian male (52 years old), 21 October 2007
I = Interviewer
M = interviewee

I: Please describe to me the term bogan in your own words. (2.0) or the characteristics the bogan, that a bogan has.

M: (3.0) My:: thoughts of what a bogan is, is:: that it’s a person who:: is perhaps ah:: a little bit untidy, unkept. Um:: not necessarily an educated person, and perhaps a little bit(1.0) oh maybe wears daggy clothes and and stuff.

I: (2.0) [um::]

M: That’s it

I: Any specific physical or mental characteristics apart from being uneducated? Is there any places where they typically come from?

M: (2.0) Mm:: I couldn’t really answer that. I don’t really know. They possibly come, I don’t know. They probably come from normal homes. You know just (2.0) unkept people who look a little bit untidy.

I: Yep. Um::: Is there any difference between a male bogan and a female bogan?

M: I really wouldn’t know the difference apart from gender.

I: (unintelligible)

M: Not really

I: Just the stereotype of the type of person?

M: Mm

I: Ok. Do you use this term yourself?

M: No, not really

I: Ok. Would you think this term is offensive? (3.0) And if so, who would it be offensive to?

M: No, I don’t think it’s offensive. Um::: Maybe if you called a person a bogan to their face they may take offence because you may be um::: stereotyping them into a category that they don’t feel they are.

I: Um::: Do, Would you be offended if someone called you a bogan?

M: (2.0) Not really, knowing the meaning of what a bogan is. I don’t think I would be offended. I would question why they’d call me that.

I: You don’t think you’re a bogan?

M: I don’t think I’m a bogan.

I: Ok. Um::: Can you describe a situation that this term could be seen as impolite.

M: (3.0) Um::: Perhaps at a social greet, ah, social meeting where ah:: you’re out having a few drinks and someone doesn’t necessarily appeal to you and you call them a bogan to their face and maybe they’re not. They maybe just a (1.0) you know a style of dress or::: perhaps maybe an unshaven look or::: or whatever but yeah just calling a person a bogan, a bogan when they’re not really.
I: Do you think that it, um:: the term is used by a particular age or type of person.

M: (1.0) Um:: I think that perhaps younger people than myself would use the word more often. I think ah:: that maybe teenage to early twenties might use (1.0) the, the term more often than perhaps my age group.

I: Um: is there any social situation where you think that it would be completely ok to (unintelligible)

M: Perhaps in a um:: environment like Fortitude Valley where you have a ah:: a different (2.0) lifestyle or type of people there. Um:: you know in Deagon for example you’ve got a an older age group ah where as the:: the Valley you have a, a cross section of different ah lifestyles and what have you. Perhaps there is might be more acceptable to use the term.

I: Ok. That sounds pretty good. Thank you.

Interview with Australian female (18 years old), 21 October 2007

I = Interviewer
R = interviewee

I: Please describe to me the meaning of the term bogan in your own words.

R: Um. Bogan is a:: common (1.0) term used in Australia for:: a rough (1.0) kid I guess.

I: [Ah::]

R: [Someone] who’s a bit of a::: (laughter) (unintelligible)

[Pause in recording to recompose]

I: Ok. Describe the word bogan.

R: Slob. That’s pretty much it.

I: Is there any other physical or mental characteristics that you can associate with the word bogan? Or with a bogan?

R: Bogan. (2.0)

I: Are they clean?

R: No. No, they look a bit rough around the edges, a bit trashy, but, (2.0) sometimes they can be funny and, it’s not a it, it. Bogan isn’t a person. Bogan’s just a term used when someone’s being a bogan.

I: So it’s a style. It’s a style of clothing. [Is it a style of clothing or is it a personality?]

R: [It’s a style, it’s a word used to] (4.0) It’s not a personality, oh it can be a personality. It’s a style. No, not generally.="

I: =What does a bogan wear?

R: It doesn’t matter what they wear, a bogan (0.5) is just a slob. It’s like it’s trackies and a shirt or something.="

I: =Trackies and a shirt. Ok. Um, what do bogans do? Is there anything you= "

R: =boganish um::="

I: Is it, what is boganish?

R: Boganish? Mm:: when people just slop around and they don’t really care.
I: So they don’t (0.5) really care about their personal opinion, ah appearance or what people think of them. Are [they smart?]
R: They’re down to earth! That’s what a bogan is! Down to earth.
I: Are they smart? Or are they dumb? Or.
R: (2.0) Um:: Bit of both. They play dumb, but I reckon bogans are usually smart because I’m bogan myself.
I: Um. So do you use the term yourself then? Obviously.
R: Yes. I use it for ‘hilarity’. Like if a girl gets dressed up and goes out for a night on the town and she’s all glammed up, I’m like, ‘You look like a bogan’ and (1.0) it really like (0.5) insults but I do it for (0.5) humour rather then
I: Offence.
R: Offence. That’s right.
I: Ok. Who do you use the term with? Is it with friends? (1.0) Family?
R: Oh friends::: family. [Occas…]
I: [Do you use it] at work?
R: At work?
I: Yep.
R: Definitely not. (laughter) [Um::]
I: So it’s something you would use with people your own age or older.
R: (1.0) Socially.
I: Ok. Would you use it with Grandma?
R: Ok::: Yes, because our Grandma’s completely different though.
I: Ok. Can you describe to me a situation when this term could be seen as impolite.
R: Um::: (2.0) No, I can’t, can’t think of one sorry.
I: So, it’s always ok?
R: For me, yes. I wouldn’t be able to say it was offens..
I: So, you wouldn’t be offended by it =
R: =No =
I: =if someone calls you a bogan.
R: No
I: So, the term is not offensive in any way (0.5) to you (0.5) or can you see how people would see it as offensive.
R: I’m sure people get offended. Like girls.
I: But mainly girls would get offended but boys would take it as a compliment?
R: Possibly, yeah.
I: Ok. Anything else you’d like to say about the word bogan?
R: (Unintelligible)

(END OF TRANSCRIPTS)
Aussie 'battler' as a cultural keyword in Australian English

NORIKO SEKIYA*

Abstract

The purpose of this research project was to examine the cultural term battler in Australian English. During the development of this paper, it was discovered that the use of this term is reflective of culture. Despite there being many meaning choices for the word, Australians use the term battler with particular meaning related to their cultural attitudes, such as toughness, informality, modesty and egalitarianism. It is vital to understand what people mean by particular words in their culture, and the values behind the word, in order to accurately understand their culture. To expand the analysis, a corpus was made to target the word battler in written texts. The fifty-four data entries collected through the newspaper article database were analysed according to their usage tendency. The paper also compares the different Australian usages of battler in with those in American English and British English. This paper supports the view that the entrenchment of specific meanings of battler is reflective of the Australian identity manifested through Australians’ use of the word.

1. Introduction

As the English language has become a universal lingua franca an understanding of the connotations of English words in international situations has become essential to avoid cultural misunderstandings. This report analyses the cultural term battler in Australian English. It examines how the term battler is used differently in modern newspaper texts, and how the meanings have shifted in terms of the Australian identity. It also proposes an intercultural English perspective, by making comparisons with the usage of the term in American and British English. This paper firstly explores the definition of battler, and the meaning shift from the eighteenth century to modern times. Secondly, it presents the methodology, the findings of the corpus and interview analyses. Thirdly, the paper compares cultural perspectives between American, British and Australian English speakers, arguing that language use is strongly connected to culture, as seen with the cultural term battler, which typically symbolises the Australian identity.

2. Literature Review

In Australian society, the term battler has been used to describe ‘ordinary’ or working class individuals who persevere through their commitments despite
adversity. Typically, this adversity comprises the challenges of low payment, family commitments, environmental hardships and lack of personal recognition. According to the Macquarie Dictionary (2005), a battler is “a conscientious worker, especially one living at subsistence level”, while the Oxford Dictionary of English (2005) suggests “a person who refuses to admit defeat in the face of difficulty.” It is not only used to refer to hard-workers who have never earned their due, but is also recognised as a term of respect and endearment intended to empower or at least acknowledge those who feel as though they exist at the bottom of society. However, the meaning of the term seems to have changed since the eighteenth century.

Ludowyk (2004) illustrated that for a long time in Australian English the term battler has coexisted with both a pejorative sense of ‘prostitute’, and the well-known positive sense of a person who works doggedly and with little reward, and who struggles for his or her livelihood. Earlier works further indicate the negative connotations of the term battler. Firstly, a battler is defined as “a bludger [which] is about the lowest form of human thing, and is a brothel bully…A battler is the feminine”, quoted from the Bulletin (December 1898). Secondly, the meaning battler was applied in 1956 as “a battler is Sydneysese for prostitute”, quoted from The Drums Go Bang (Ludowyk 2004). A third definition, “a battler was also the name given a woman who earned a few extra quid for her old man by sleeping around”, was quoted from Green Bans in 1978 (Ludowyk 2004). The completely negative connotations of battler, however, seem to have faded away in modern texts.

The term battler has also been used in a slightly different sense, being used to describe an unemployed person, such as a ‘swagman’ or ‘itinerant worker’ seeking to subsist while looking for employment, or an unemployed person living by ‘opportunism’ and his ‘wit’ (Ludwyk 2004). These battlers imply moral superiority to the morally inferior meaning of ‘prostitute’; however, there is no admiration of the usage in this sense. In contrast, battler can also represent in modern texts, a person who has few natural advantages, but works doggedly and with little reward, struggles hard for livelihood, and displays enormous courage in doing so. In all these usages, the core iconic sense remains that the struggle is for livelihood, showing great courage in doing so. Following this basic overview of the term battler, the next section presents the methodology and results of the corpus.

3. Methodology

A small corpus was made to target the word battler in the written texts. The fifty-four data entries collected through the newspaper article database Factiva were analysed according to their usage tendency. The analytical material focused on daily Australian newspapers from 2006 until 2007. The language variety was Australian English (see Appendix 1 for sample corpus). Interviews were also
carried out with a female American lecturer and a well-educated male British office worker, both over twenty years of age. The interviews consisted of semi-scripted questions and were recorded and transcribed (see Appendix 2 for questionnaire and sample answers).

4. Results

The corpus research discovered three regular patterns among the meanings: these were categorised as positive, negative and neutral. In regards its positive connotations, a battler was basically a person who comes up against hard working conditions and a tough environment, who perseveres despite the odds being stacked against him or her especially in regards to finance, health and sport. For instance:

(1) An Aussie battler lost his $23M winning ticket. Who is the mega millionaire? The mystery winner is a young battler, a hard working family man from the north of Brisbane. (21 May 2007, Federal Government Broadcast Alerts)

(2) Working battlers Budget winners: The little Aussie battler is set to be the big winner in tonight’s Federal Budget as the Government moves to entice more people into the workforce, especially mothers. (8 May 2007, The Courier-Mail)

These cases indicated that the battlers are hard working men and mothers who are struggling financially. This was extended metaphorically to Australian business and finance as seen in the following examples.

(3) The good old Aussie battler has conquered the US80 level in the past couple of months -- and now sits at its best level in just over 10 years. (9 June 2007, Herald-Sun)

(4) It is nice to see Leighton’s banner on a development and see that it is built by a company that is an Aussie battler. (27 May 2007, Australian Associated Press Financial News Wire)

The usage of battler in example (3) to represent the Australian dollar, which had been struggling against the American dollar for a long time, is reflective of the high status associated with a battler. This positive connotation could be seen from the choice of the word ‘conquered’ in this example. Example (4) is similar in it refers to a company that came from the bottom rung of society, but had made it to the top.

Other cases focused on the difficulty of achieving a top position in sport.
(5) Aussie battler Peter Luczak pulled off one of the finest wins of his career, rolling tournament No. 5 seed Dominik Hrbaty in straight sets at the Next Generation Adelaide International at Memorial Drive then looked to bigger things yesterday. (2 January 2007, The Advertiser)

(6) Long way to the top – How an Aussie battler finally kicked a goal. (24 December 2006, Sunday Mail)

(7) Even in defeat, the unheralded Aussie battler drew wide praise in his first grand slam outside Australia. (31 August 2007, Herald-Sun)

These cases illustrated that battlers are sports players who are praised for their efforts to achieve the top position or to win, even though they were the underdogs. The praise could be seen through the words such as ‘finally kicked a goal’ and ‘even in defeat’.

Other instances relate to the struggle of serious illness, or a hard environment due to their disablement. This connotation includes not only the person suffering, but also the partners and family members who look after those suffering, as battlers. For instance:

(8) Mikayla shows her courage in fight with cancer Aussie battler. (4 December 2006, Townsville Bulletin)

(9) Long cardiac treatment for baby Tiny Aimee has the heart of a battler. (26 September 2006, The Advertiser)

(10) Burns battler back into the swing of life. (29 March 2007, The Newcastle Herald)

In these examples a battler is someone that just keeps trying – no matter how hard things are. ‘They’ are always prepared to have a go or just keep going. As seen from these examples so far, the positive connotations associated with battlers are not restricted to people; they can be attributed to anything, for example, currency status. This positive meaning was reflected in most of the examples collected in this small corpus.

However, some of the instances of battler can be characterised as having more neutral connotations in that there is not necessarily respect or admiration implied. In this more neutral sense it is used as a class term. Battlers are ordinary or lower class individuals who persevere through their commitments despite adversity. For instance:

(11) Kevin Rudd has made his first pitch to win back ‘Howard’s battlers’, promising free dental care for a potential 1.5 million Australians. (14 December 2006, Daily Telegraph)

(12) Rising food prices are changing attitudes among Howard’s battlers. (21 December 2006, The Age)
These instances are neutral in terms of admiration. Here, battler is used as a class term to describe them as ordinary middle to lower class workers. In comparison, some instances, although less frequent, could be interpreted negatively. For instance:

(13) Forklift driver Kevin Leishman shed his little Aussie battler tag yesterday to become an instant property millionaire. (7 September 2007, The Courier-Mail)
(14) The little Aussie battler, it seems, would be better called the little Aussie whinger. Australian consumers, too busy crying poor, have failed to realise that almost everything – from food and alcohol to cars, and even petrol – is becoming more affordable. (7 July 2007, The Age)
(15) The Aussie ‘battler’ mentality is a negative ideal that could hold Australia back from developing its full potential. (25 October 2006, The Australian)

These instances emphasise obvious negative connotations, through the terminologies ‘tag’, ‘whinger’ and the phrase ‘the Aussie battler mentality is a negative ideal’.

However, the completely negative meaning of ‘prostitute’ found in the literature review, did not appear in these research results.

From these findings, it can be concluded that battler is more commonly used with positive connotations of respect, friendliness and solidarity, or as a class term to describe ordinary people, rather than having negative connotations which refer to those who immorally go through the hardships with complaints and negative attitudes such as whinging. With regard to the meaning of the Australian battler, there is an argument that the use of some terms closely reflects culture (Wierzbicka 1986). The next section will reflect on the influence of culture upon language usage.

5. Discussion

Wierzbicka (1986) argues that “language as a guide to social reality” helps us to understand intercultural linguistic differences (p.349). In other words, lexical choices and meanings can be linked with particular cultural values in a particular variety of English. According to Goddard (2006) and Wierzbicka (1986), Australia is a ‘toughness’ culture and Australians also have a strong preference for ‘informality’. It seems that this is sometimes able to be taken as rudeness due to the lack of social knowledge; however, it also displays respect (p.69, p.355). Wierzbicka (1991) emphasised that informality as an Australian social attitude, namely, “the purposeful rejection of any overt show of respect, with implications of familiarity, friendliness and equality: (p.150). Hence, battler could be an Australian indirect way of displaying familiarity, friendliness and equality for
people who are battling. From the ‘toughness’ cultural perspective, Australians admire battlers because Australians encourage people not to be overwhelmed by the harsh life which may face them but rather to ‘bear up’ and try to do something for themselves. Therefore, the ‘fighting spirit’ is highly respected in Australian culture. In its essence; the term battler expresses the value system of the Australian identity.

Another Australian cultural attitude combination, modesty and ‘egalitarianism’, could also support the idea of admiration for battlers (Goddard 2004: 66). As a desirable attitude, Australians have to actively play down and hide their success and intelligence. There is a characteristic cultural expression – ‘tall poppy syndrome’. Australians seem most proud of an achievement when a tall poppy has been lopped or an underdog has won. As a popular instance, an cricket player, Donald Bradman, was able to defeat the English team even though he was an underdog. Another instance is Phar Lap, a horse that had previously lost and then became a champion. A final instance is the infamous Ned Kelly, an underdog who saved people and became a hero. All of these characters are admired as heroes who used to be underdogs then defeated the ‘tall poppies’. From the viewpoint of egalitarianism, battlers are thus ordinary and fellows of everybody. The term battler draws upon the inherent ordinariness of groups of people who struggle for their livelihoods. It can thus be argued that the respectful and affectionate expression battler might be rooted in the emphasis placed on ‘toughness’ and ‘egalitarianism’ by Australian English speakers.

However, the cultural meaning of battler does not seem to exist in other English varieties, as battler has only a literal meaning in other varieties of English such as American English and British English. From the interviews, it can be seen that American and British English speakers also admire the underdog, and value the process and effort to fight in the same way Australian culture does. However, in these varieties of English, this admiration is not lexicalised in the same way as battler with its particularly Australian connotations. It is used only literally, to mean when someone is battling against or for something, and is to a large extent interchangeable with the term worker. Thus, battler has not been lexicalised in this way in other varieties of English even though these cultures have similar values for a group of people who never give up.

6. Conclusion

Based on this initial research it can be concluded that battler is used in Australian English with the following underlying cultural presuppositions:

- I say someone is an underdog
- I feel empathy towards them
- I want them to win
- I think they are heroes
- I think they are just ordinary
In conclusion, battler is a culturally symbolic term describing the Australian identity, even though the definition of battler can be interpreted in different ways depending on the context. It has a negative connotation of someone who is poor and struggling to survive; it also has a positive connotation of being a hero, someone who is overcoming adversity through hard work and perseverance. In addition, battler is also commonly used as a class term to describe ordinary people in contemporary newspaper and media texts. However, even though the word battler has different interpretations, it is worth noting that word choices are always open to speakers and these preferences help point to their underlying cultural values. It is vital to understand what people mean by certain words in their culture, and the values behind the word, in order to accurately understand their culture. Despite American and British cultures having similar values in terms of admiring showing effort and meeting challenges, only Australian English has lexicalised the term to describe this praise for the fighting spirit. The entrenchment of this sense of battler clearly shows the Australian cultural identity through Australians’ use of the word. Therefore, it is worthwhile to undertake further research about specific cultural terms in particular varieties of English in order to enhance intercultural understanding.

*Author notes
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References
Appendix 1: Examples of *battler* from corpus

1. SURGERY Long cardiac treatment for baby Tiny Aimee has the heart of a battler (26 September 2006 The Advertiser)
2. *Battler’s* dream may die *Battler’s* dream in danger of dying A TRUE blue Aussie *battler*’s dream may be about to die. (26 September 2006 Canterbury Bankstown Express)
3. Burns *battler* back into the swing of life (29 March 2007 The Newcastle Herald)
4. The Manhattan may have an American-sounding name, but it’s very much a Down Under design geared for the Aussie *battler*. (31 March 2007 Sunday Times (Perth))
5. *Battler* Jill loses fight against rare disease (29 March 2007 Derby Evening Telegraph)
6. *Battler* boer will be hard act to follow (29 March 2007 Gloucestershire Echo)
7. While Wayne Arthurs has impressed with his ability to will a body on the wrong side of 30 through qualifying and the early rounds at Wimbledon, another Aussie *battler* is plotting her path to next year’s Beijing Olympics. (30 June 2007 Australian Associated Press - Sports News)
8. RESILIENT *battler* Souths Logan yesterday snapped a six-game losing streak in grand style to maintain its two-point advantage over fellow cellar dwellers Central. (2 July 2007 The Courier-Mail)
9. Barrister Jonathon Davies has taken on some good causes in his lifetime, including voluntarily helping secure the acquittal of Morley *battler* John Button 39 years after he was convicted over a killing to which serial killer Eric Edgar Cooke had confessed. (4 July 2007 The West Australian)
10. Six-year-old *battler* Kirsty-Lee fighting rare genetic disorder (7 July 2007 The West Australian)
11. Little Aussie *battler* once again relishes an enormous challenge 23 September 2007Canberra Times
12. US currency plunge allows Aussie *battler* a strong run (22 September 2007 The Sydney Morning Herald)
13. Comedian Anh Do has won $200,000 as a celebrity guest on the Seven Network game show, Deal or No Deal, for a Melbourne battler who cares full time for his ill wife. (19 September 2007 Australian Associated Press General News)
14. FORKLIFT driver Kevin Leishman shed his little Aussie *battler* tag yesterday to become an instant property millionaire. (7 September 2007 The Courier-Mail)
15. IT wasn’t the historic fourth world title she coveted but after being left dizzy and ‘seeing stars’ from a violent punch to the head, Aussie *battler* Emma Snows ill has rated her silver medal at the BG world triathlon championships yesterday as one of her greatest achievements.(3 September 2007 Daily Telegraph)
16. Aussie *battler* walks proud (2 September 2007 Sunday Telegraph)
17. Big banks hound Aussie battle (31 August 2007 The Sydney Morning Herald)
18. Chaney argued that the Australian mindset is shifting from battler to aspirant. If confirmed over time, this would represent a profound change in Australian political and economic culture/ From Aussie *battler* to aspirant LETTER FROM . . . SYDNEY (6 November 2006 New Zealand Herald)
19. Nadal pushed to four sets by Aussie *battler* Jones digs deep (31 August 2007 Herald-Sun)
20. Even in defeat, the unheralded Aussie battler drew wide praise in his first grand slam outside Australia. (31 August 2007 Herald-Sun)

21. Free TV, representing the free-to-air channels, is also working on an EPG system - but one that tries to prevent uploads of recorded digital programs. Kossatz says it’s now ‘all systems go’ for his little Aussie battler. (13 August 2007 The Sydney Morning Herald)

22. It is cheering to see the gigantic Aussie battler achieve another ambition. (3 August 2007 The Australian)

23. I used the word “dreaming” because it comes from the film The Castle in which the Aussie battler Darryl Kerrigan takes on the Australian Government which wants to take his property. (28 July 2007 Canberra Times)

24. IN all the jabbing and weaving now taking place between the Federal Government and the Opposition over fears of rates rises and climate change, the little Aussie battler doesn’t seem to rate much of a mention. (27 July 2007 Geelong Advertiser)

25. THE little Aussie battler, it seems, would be better called the little Aussie whinger. Australian consumers, too busy crying poor, have failed to realise that almost everything - from food and alcohol to cars, and even petrol - is becoming more affordable. (7 July 2007 The Age)

26. THE good old Aussie battler has conquered the US80 level in the past couple of months -- and now sits at its best level in just over 10 years. (9 June 2007 Herald-Sun)

27. It is nice to see Leighton’s banner on a development and see that it is built by a company that is an Aussie battler. (27 May 2007 Australian Associated Press Financial News Wire)


29. An Aussie battler lost his $23M winning ticket. Who is the mega millionaire? The mystery winner is a young battler, a hard working family man from the north of Brisbane. (21 May 2007 Federal Government Broadcast Alerts)

30. Working battlers Budget winners: THE little Aussie battler is set to be the big winner in tonight’s Federal Budget as the Government moves to entice more people into the workforce, especially mothers (8 May 2007 The Courier-Mail)

31. Aussie battler Takes Down Cunning Kiwi: In a tournament that went well into the early hours of Sunday morning, one man stood above the rest to take out the New Zealand Poker Championships at Christchurch Casino. (22 April 2007 12:51 Scoop.co.nz)

32. LIZ Carroll is the epitome of the Aussie battler: Her battles, though, are greater and more regular than most of ours. Not only does she have to engage them from the confines of a wheelchair, but her opponents come in many guises. (6 April 2007 Geelong Advertiser)

33. The Manhattan may have an American-sounding name, but it’s very much a Down Under design geared for the Aussie battler. Ideally, this budget-priced home is best suited to a corner block or acreage. (31 March 2007 Sunday Times (Perth))

34. A group of ‘Aussie battler’ victims of Christmas Day 2001 bushfires is suing the NSW government, claiming not enough was done to warn them before the blazes swept through the township of Warragamba. (14 March 2007 Australian Associated Press General News)
35. OK, so the ‘Aussie battler’ makes good overseas’ success story is a bit of a cliche. But the three former bicycle couriers behind Crumpler bags aren’t your average entrepreneurs. It’s hard to believe these laid-back larrikins run a multimillion dollar company that spans the globe. But don’t let aesthetics fool you.( 25 February 2007 Sunday Herald Sun)
36. His face was a handsome, coffee-coloured mix of Aussie battler and mail-order Filipino bride,( 10 February 2007 The Gold Coast Bulletin)
37. A remarkable life Chan Ear’s escape from the killing fields:CHAN Ear is the archetypal Aussie battler who most people would be proud to call a fellow citizen.( 31 January 2007 Moorabbin Glen Eira/Kingston Leader)
38. HOW appropriate on our national day that there is still a place for a little Aussie battler to face up to the impossible.( 25 January 2007 Sportsman)
39. Although it might now be known as the little Aussie battler considering the competition from other varieties such as the ever-popular sauvignon blanc, even pinot gris.( 20 January 2007 The Age)
40. Mistletoe bird a little Aussie battler (16 January 2007 Geelong Advertiser)
41. a little Aussie battler with a scarf. We see her at home with her ocker husband Albert laughing together as they prepare the evening meal that will break their daily Ramadan fast.( 3 January 2007 The Courier-Mail)
42. AUSSIE battler Peter Luczak pulled off one of the finest wins of his career, rolling tournament No. 5 seed Dominik Hrbaty in straight sets at the Next Generation Adelaide International at Memorial Drive then looked to bigger things yesterday.( 2 January 2007 The Advertiser)
43. Long way to the top - How an Aussie battler finally kicked a goal(24 December 2006 Sunday Mail,)
44. TAKEOVER TARGETED Stewards pull rug on Aussie battler’s tilt at Sprint glory(11 December 2006 Townsville Bulletin)
45. Mikayla shows her courage in fight with cancer Aussie battler (4 December 2006 Townsville Bulletin)
46. I believe Australians have proved time and again they will vote for boring, hard-working men with glasses, who look like a safe pair of hands and can talk with knowledge and authority about every topic of government. C’mon Labor, give the little Aussie battler from Queensland a go.( 4 December 2006 The Newcastle Herald)
47. accountants Ron Ford and Stephen Bright were given the job of selling the Madura Tea Company. But the more they looked into the little Aussie battler company at Clothiers Creek, the more they realised it was just their cup of tea. Doug Farrington investigates(2 December 2006 The Gold Coast Bulletin)
48. he should as Butt and Anderson have helped transform him from a slightly one-paced Aussie battler into a sharper, more complete open-class force.( 15 November 2006 New Zealand Herald)
49. THE Aussie ‘battler’ mentality is a negative ideal that could hold Australia back from developing its full potential.( 25 October 2006 The Australian)
50. The veteran MP, known to many as the little Aussie battler, reckons people would come out in huge numbers if there was a proposal to replace the flag. (12 October 2006 Hobart Mercury)
51. KEVIN Rudd has made his first pitch to win back *Howard's battlers*, promising free dental care for a potential 1.5 million Australians. (14 December 2006 Daily Telegraph)

52. Rising food prices are changing attitudes among *Howard's battlers*. (21 December 2006 The Age)

53. John *Howard's battlers* are wavering and next week's Budget will start the Federal Government's fight to lure them back, reports John McCarthy (5 May 2007 The Courier-Mail)

54. Labor research leaked to News Ltd's The Daily Telegraph shows swings of between eight and 12 per cent in up to 10 seats in the first sign of a shift in the *Howard battler* seats since 1998. (14 September 2007 Australian Associated Press Financial News Wire)
Appendix 2: Sample answers from interviews

Respondent 1: British male, 36 years old (Business man, British English speaker)
Q1. When you hear the term ‘battler’ who do you think of?
A: FOOTBALLERS or Steve Waugh (cricketer)! It is a term you often hear in sport.

Q2. Is it negative or positive?
A: It can be both. It can mean that when someone is a battler they are not gifted or talented. It can be positive because the term means they are mentally tough.

Q3. Do you admire the ‘battlers’ = underdogs, even if they do not win?
A: Yes. They try to win.

Q4. In Australian English, ‘Battler’ is an Australian worker, who comes up against hard working conditions and a tough environment, who perseveres despite the odds being stacked against them. They just keep trying no matter how hard things are. It has a very positive connotation in Australian English.

Do you have a term to describe that group of people in your English?
A: We normally call them ‘a worker’

Q5. Have you ever heard/used the word with this connotation?
A: Yes.

Respondent 2: American Female, 28 year old (University Lecturer, American English speaker)
Q1. When you hear the term ‘battler’ who do you think of?
A: I would say a fighter, a person who doesn’t give up – a survivor.

Q2. Is it negative or positive?
A: It would be positive.

Q3. Do you admire the ‘battlers’ = underdogs, even if they do not win?
A: Yes, we do encourage trying. When I was a child, I was taught and I was often encouraged in my efforts and trying was the most important thing. Generally speaking, it doesn’t matter if you win or lose.

Q4. In Australian English, ‘Battler’ is an Australian worker, who comes up against hard working conditions and a tough environment, who perseveres despite the odds being stacked against them. They just keep trying no matter how hard things are. It has a very positive connotation in Australian English.

Do you have a term to describe that group of people in your English?
A: We don’t have such a word. We probably just call them ‘a worker’.

Q5. Have you ever heard/used the word with this connotation?
A: No, never ever heard that.
“Where the bloody hell are you?”: Bloody hell and (im)politeness in Australian English

MINHA HONG*

Abstract

Controversy surrounds the Tourism Australia campaign catch phrase “Where the bloody hell are you?” Some think that the catch phrase shows light-hearted play on stereotypical characteristics of Australia such as “informality”, “casualness” and “friendliness”. Others say that, since the ad represents Australia, it should show more politeness and courtesy in standing for the country. This research first analysed based on corpus data how Australians use “bloody hell” in their casual conversation. Using ethnographic interviewing of Australian and non-Australian English speakers, the research then sought to uncover perceptions of the level of (im)politeness of these words. Lastly, the results of this analysis were used to explored how this phrase is used between speakers of different varieties of English. The research indicates that from an intercultural point of view, saying “bloody hell” is perceived differently when it comes to (im)politeness. It may be considered to be impolite in other cultures; however, it has been part of the ordinary discourse of Australian English speakers for a long time. Therefore, it should be respected as a common and casual Australian phrase used in their everyday life to show their characteristics of casualness and friendliness

1. Introduction: “So where the bloody hell are you?”

This is the catch phrase of Tourism Australia’s marketing campaign encouraging tourists to visit Australia. The advertisement features images of Australians preparing for visitors to their country. It begins in an outback pub – the barkeeper says that he’s poured a beer; moves on to a young boy on the beach – he says he’s got the sharks out of the swimming pool; and then to partygoers watching Sydney Harbour fireworks, who say that they’ve turned on the lights. The commercial ends with a girl stepping out of the ocean asking “So where the bloody hell are you?”

In short, it features images of Australia, not only through its great scenic attractions of rainforests, beaches and Opera House, but also through the impact of the words “bloody hell” in the final question. It is said that the advertisement with its catch phrase shows a light-hearted play on stereotypical characteristics of Australia such as ‘informality’, ‘casualness’ and ‘friendliness’. However, when this advertisement first appeared on TV, there was a lot of controversy about its way of expressing casualness. Some thought that since it was sponsored by Tourism Australia, thereby representing Australia, it should show more
politeness and courtesy towards its audience in different countries. Others said that it was a valiant attempt to show the ‘real Australia’, with a proud attitude towards Australian culture. Those controversies triggered this study of the possibility of impoliteness from using the intensifier ‘the bloody hell’, which in Australia is commonly used in everyday conversation. In addition, this research includes the perceptions of the phrase by Australians and speakers of other varieties of English, which has implications for intercultural impoliteness in English.

2. Methodology

As indicated, this research aims to analyse and compare the notion of (im)politeness invoked by the spoken data among intercultural speakers. Therefore, the research used the methodology of ethnopragmatics, which aims to ‘understand speech practices which make sense to the people concerned, i.e., in terms of indigenous values, beliefs and attitudes, social categories, emotions, and so on’ (Goddard 2006: 2). This involved both the analysis of a corpus of examples and ethnographic interviews.

First, the research analyses how English speakers use ‘bloody hell’ in their casual conversation by looking through the corpus data. Second, ethnographic interviewing is used, to find out what Australian English speakers think about that phrase in terms of (im)politeness, and then, by interviewing people from other countries such as the United Kingdom, to analyse their perceptions of these words, again in terms of (im)politeness. Lastly, based on the results of this analysis, the research explores an intercultural view of the interaction between speakers of Australian English and people from other countries.

3. Corpus data analysis

The first methodology used is corpus linguistics, which views a language as a social phenomenon which can be investigated on the basis of spoken texts (Mahlberg 2006). The research used two major corpus data sets available on the Web, the British National Corpus and the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English. Since the analysis is mainly of the speech of Australians, it would have been more appropriate to use Australian spoken data; however, there was no corpus of Australian English freely available. The selected corpus data was searched using cultural keywords such as ‘bloody’ or ‘bloody hell’, which are said to be characteristic of the speech acts of Australian English speakers (Wierzbicka 2002).

The first word analysed through corpus data was the word ‘bloody’. Its actual lexical meaning is an adjective form of the word ‘blood’, which means ‘stained or covered with blood’; however, in terms of slang, it can be used as an intensifier to emphasise a speaker’s emotion or a situation itself. Nowadays it is
generally considered to be a very mild expletive, unlikely to cause offence in most circles. While it is a very common part of Australian speech in everyday conversation (Wierzbicka 2002), its usage in other varieties of English has not been well-documented. This research analysed a random selection of 50 samples resulting from the search for ‘bloody’ in the British National Corpus. Firstly, it can be used as an intensifier implying positive meaning when it modifies the adjective ‘good’ or ‘well’ or ‘happy’. Secondly, it also can be used as an intensifier containing negative meaning with the adjective ‘stupid’, ‘fool’ or ‘rubbish’. Moreover, with a neutral adjective, neither positive nor negative, it can also be used as an expletive, for example in the examples below.

(1) It’s so bloody quiet here (GUU 3837)
(2) I was bloody livid! (KE6 4681)

As an expletive attribute, it implies a negative intention on part of the speaker. It is not an essential part of the sentence structure, but simply adding it can intensify the tone of a speaker. For instance:

(3) Turn off that bloody shower (BPA 2387)
(4) That bloody phone call! (HWM 2839)

It can also be used as the actual lexical meaning of the adjective form of the noun ‘blood’, meaning ‘stained with blood’. Finally, it can be used as a swear word.

(5) Oh, bloody hell! (KB7 4826)

The second word analysed is ‘hell’, which means the place or state of punishment for the wicked after death. However there are a lot more usages of the word in combination with the definite article ‘the’. First, it can be used as an intensifier to express surprise, anger, or impatience.

(6) Why the hell couldn’t he remember it? (A73 1829)
(7) What the hell’s happening? (ARB 718)

Secondly, it also can be used sarcastically or ironically to express the opposite of what is being stated.

(8) Are you listening to me? The hell you are! (H9V 2147)

Third, as an intensifier, it implies a meaning with great speed, effort, or intensity.

(9) We ran like hell to get home before the storm. (FPB 2739)
And lastly, like ‘bloody’, it can be used as a swear word or an exclamation.

(10) Hell, the whole luggage is gone! (JYB 28)

The third phrase I looked through is ‘bloody hell’, as in the sentence ‘Where the bloody hell are you?’ First, it can be used as a swear word or exclamation meaning ‘Damn it’.

(11) Bloody hell, how did you think of it? (ADY 1860)

Also, it can be used as an intensifier as seen in the example below.

(12) What the bloody hell are you doing here? (BP7 684)

From these results of the searching through corpus data, it can be concluded that the intensifier ‘bloody hell’ is used in various situations and conversations in spoken English.

4. Ethnographic interviews with English speakers

Building on this conclusion, ethnographic interviewing was used to analyse the possibility of (im)politeness associated with saying ‘bloody hell’. Four Australian English speakers were interviewed individually, then five Australian English speakers who are students of Griffith University were interviewed in a group situation. Two British English speakers from the United Kingdom were also interviewed.

First, in the group-interviewing of five Australian English speakers – three male speakers and two female speakers – interviewees were asked if they use ‘the bloody hell’ often in their everyday conversation. One of the male speakers and one of the female speakers answered that they usually do not use those words, while the rest of them answered that they do. One interviewee added an opinion that it may be a personal preference to use those words.

They were next asked if they think those words are impolite to use in Australia. One of the male speakers who had answered that he does not use those words often said that some people, especially those who have a religion such as Christianity, would be offended if those words are spoken to them. Because in Christianity ‘hell’ means the place or state of punishment of the wicked after death, it is considered as a taboo notion. However, the other male speaker who said he uses those words very often argued that most Australians would feel alright to speak and to hear the words ‘bloody hell’. He insisted that in everyday conversation, even people of older generations also may not be offended if they heard those words because these words are very casual and are commonly used.
In another interview, a male aged 25 answered that he does not use the words very often but he does sometimes. However he said that he is not offended to hear other people use them, and often does not even notice when someone uses them. He added that those words are just like other common words to him in his casual conversation. In short, using the words ‘the bloody hell’ in Australia is usually not impolite in everyday conversation. In addition, most Australians are not offended when they hear them as well.

Table 1: How often do you use the words ‘bloody hell’ in everyday life?

Table 2: How do you perceive the words ‘bloody hell’ in everyday life?

Next, an English speaker from the United Kingdom was interviewed in order to analyse perceptions of (im)politeness of the use of ‘bloody hell’ in another variety of English. The interviewee was a middle-aged female English speaker from Oxford, United Kingdom. She was asked about the possibility of there being impoliteness associated with using the words ‘bloody hell’. First, she started her answer with the campaign of Tourism Australia saying ‘Where the bloody hell are you?’ She argued that there is a possibility that some Australians might even be embarrassed when they first saw the campaign. Moreover, she felt a bit irritated when she herself saw that advertisement, because she found its tone rude and impolite in saying that. She said it implied that if you are not in Australia now, you are an ‘idiot’. Literally, the campaign keeps asking where ‘the bloody hell’ are we (the potential tourists). Moreover, she related this to the brand naming strategy of FCUK (French Connection United Kingdom), one of
the famous fashion brands of United Kingdom. She insisted that the firm should stop its marketing strategy of its brand name looking ‘accidentally’ similar to the ‘f-word’. She said she was shocked the first time she saw the advertisement, and she was not very pleased to see that advertisement again.

Accordingly, there is the possibility of intercultural impoliteness arising when Australian English speakers and British English speakers here the words ‘bloody hell’. On the one hand, Australian speakers consider it just as a common word in the casual conversation; on the other hand, a British English speaker considered it as a rather impolite expression to use or to hear.

5. Conclusion

This research has attempted to sketch out the possibility of it being impolite to say the intensifier ‘bloody hell’ in Australian English. First, using corpus data system, the research collected and analysed the data of various usages of ‘bloody’, ‘(the) hell’, and ‘bloody hell’, finding these to be used in various situations and conversations in everyday spoken English. Second, using the methodology of ethnographic interviewing, Australian English speakers and British English speakers indicated how they consider the words ‘the bloody hell’ in terms of potential (im)politeness. Usually, Australian speakers do not think it is impolite to say or hear the words, however, the British speaker interviewed thought the words were a bit rude. Moreover, with these results, comparisons could be made between Australian and British notions of being impolite, with the finding that in this case intercultural impoliteness could exist.

Proceeding from what has been said above, it should be concluded that from an intercultural point of view, saying ‘bloody hell’ is perceived differently regarding (im)politeness. It may be considered to be impolite in other countries; however, in a point of view of cultural relativism, it is a part of long-standing Australian culture and life style. Therefore, it should be respected as one of their common and casual phrases used in their everyday life to express the casualness and friendliness characteristics they have.

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“Keepin’ it real, mate”:
A study of identity in Australian Hip Hop

ZACHARIAH DOMINELLO*

Abstract

This paper examines identity construction among Australian hip hop (AHH) artists. Data was gathered by comparing phonological differences between artists’ performance speech and regular speech. After examining the gathered information, a pattern became clear where the AHH artists tended to use a Broad Australian English (AusE) accent when performing, while using Standard AusE in regular speech. The use of Broad AusE is argued to be used by the artists to differentiate themselves from their US hip hop counterparts, and to show unity in the Australian hip hop community.

1. Introduction

This paper will examine the areas of identity construction and hip hop in the US and then in Australia and the trends that have been found. Levy (2001) suggests hip hop constitutes

a global urban subculture that has entered people’s lives and become a universal practice among youth the world over. From a local fad among black youth in the Bronx, it has gone to become a global practice, giving new parameters of meaning to otherwise locally or nationally diverse identities. (Levy 2001: 134)

Linguists (cf. Alim 2002; Edwards 2002), however, have only begun to document the language associated with hip hop. Most of that work explores the relationship of hip hop language (HHL) in rap music lyrics to African American English (AAE) syntactic, discourse, and lexical features (Cutler 2007: 1).

O’Hanlon (2006: 193), however, claims that “the language contained within the music of a youth subculture known as ‘Australian Hip Hop’ (AHH) exhibits some interesting behaviours, in particular, AHH has largely rejected the American English (AmE) phonological trends.” O’Hanlon (2006) points out that in the case of hip hop in Australia, a local identity is maintained linguistically in keeping with hip hop’s philosophy of ‘keeping it real’, that is, being authentic, suggesting that the genre is simultaneously loyal to and distinct from its American origins. That is to say there is great importance placed on expressing one’s ‘Australianness’ in hip hop in Australia. How the artists express their ‘Australianness’ will be studied in this paper by comparing the phonological differences between artists’ performance and regular speech.
2. Hip hop and identity construction in the U.S.

A trend has developed where upper middle-class white youth are practising African American vernacular English (AAVE), among other hip hop related activities. Cutler (1999) discusses the role of hip hop culture in young whites’ motivation to use AAVE features in their speech. Cutler investigated one upper middle class white teenager in New York who employed linguistic features of African American vernacular English (AAVE). Mike, the participant of the case study, showed evidence of practising AAVE from the age of 13, when he started identifying with hip hop culture. Cutler began collecting data from Mike from the age of 15. He was observed by Cutler until the age of 19. Cutler argued that the adoption of African American speech markers is an attempt by young middle class whites to take part in the complex prestige of African American youth culture. Mike was a family friend of Cutler. To collect data she observed and regularly interacted with Mike. She also recorded interviews with Mike and some of his friends in discussion about hip hop and in general conversation. Cutler found, in the case of Mike, that he wanted to participate in an essentialised version of urban black male youth culture, but he was uncomprehending about the restrictions, angered about rejection and worried about being labelled a ‘wannabie’ by his peers.

3. Hip Hop in Australia

Koolism, an Australian hip hop group that won an ARIA award in 2006, said in their dedication speech that they dedicated their award to:

the whole Australian hip hop community … and all the Australians who ‘keep it real’ for want of a better phrase. Be yourself. Enough of that American wannabe trash. (Mitchell 2007: 110)

This speech was made in the presence of a supportive U.S. hip hopper, Kool Herc, and a rather bewildered commercial US hip hop group, the Black Eyed Peas. This was a public declaration that indicated that Koolism found it important to represent themselves as part of a nationally based community which operated outside the parameters of both commercial US hip hop and the mainstream Australian music industry. Koolism’s remarks drew criticism from an Australian representative of Sony Music. At the time, Sony were attempting to manufacture an Australian equivalent of US white rapper Eminem, a US-accented Sydney-based MC called Figgkidd, whose performances and recordings tended to evoke scorn and derision from the more ‘hard core’ members of the Australian hip hop community (Mitchell 2007). This exemplifies the importance Australian hip hoppers hold on expressing an Australian identity in their music.
O’Hanlon (2006) has conducted a study of youth music in Australia and its history of aping American accents. Australian hip hop seems to be different phonologically to other genres of Australian music, defying the conventions of lyrical performance. Her paper examined this interesting sociolinguistic phenomenon by providing a picture of phonological variation within youth music in Australia, enabling a comparison between hip hop and other genres. O’Hanlon argued that performance accent is closely tied to several factors, including cultural identity and genre appropriateness. In the case of hip hop, a local identity is maintained linguistically, in keeping with hip hop’s philosophy of keepin’ it real, suggesting that the genre is simultaneously loyal to and distinct from its American origins.

The Australian English (AusE) accent is employed by AHH artists to aid identification with their target audience, most likely working class youth of the urban centres of Australia, to maintain a local authenticity in keeping with hip hop’s philosophy, and to emphasise a distinction between AHH and hip hop music from the United States (USHH), where the genre originated. The AHH artists not only largely avoid the ubiquitous American pronunciation model, but they also frequently display broad AusE accents, which can be said to contribute to the Australianness of the songs (O’Hanlon 2006).

The methodology employed in O’Hanlon’s (2006) study was based on Trudgill’s (1983) use of the linguistic variable to determine the extent to which artists adhere to an American model of pronunciation. O’Hanlon selected and investigated 30 AHH songs and 30 Australian non-HH songs. She found that 26 of the 30 AHH artists used the standard AusE variable. The 6 AHH artists who used American features did not use them consistently. She also found that there is an introduction of local phonological features in AHH, with 17 of the artists using the broad Australian variant [ɔI] for the (AY) variable, and none of the non-HH artists using this variant.

O’Hanlon suggests from these results that AHH artists exhibit predominantly AusE (including broad) phonological features in their rapping because of a desire to identify with young Australians. This can also be attributed to the artists’ desire to show hip hop loyalty and membership within the community. Alim (2002) argues that language is used by hip hop artists to construct an identity of ‘street-consciousness’, and that in fact there is a greater presence of non-standard (including AAVE) grammatical and phonological features in the rapping of Hip Hop artists than there is in their natural speech. Following this, it can be argued that AHH artists use language, including local phonological features, to project a hip hop identity, ensuring membership within the hip hop community and an image of ‘street-consciousness’, with their primary audience. This description of the AHH artists’ linguistic behaviour accounts for their divergence from the youth music pronunciation standards (i.e. ‘American’ standards) which are prevalent in non-HH contexts (O’Hanlon 2006).
The areas of identity construction and hip hop studied in this paper bear a remarkable resemblance to the findings of a linguistic survey of the 1950s on the island of Martha’s Vineyard (Labov, cited in Holmes 2001: 198–199). That survey found a trend similar to the one that is happening in Australian hip hop today, a trend of expressing one’s identity as part of a community through phonological techniques. The study of Martha’s Vineyard found that the locals of the island were using a pronunciation style unique to that island, a style that expressed the users’ association with the island, their connectedness with it, and at the same time the pronunciation style distanced them from the tourists and visitors of the island (Holmes 2001:198–199). This is basically what the hip hop community is doing in Australia. They are using a particular speech style to associate themselves with the hip hop community, to express their hip hop identity.

Taking into account the gaps in research thus far in this area and the trends found in research that has been carried out in Australia and the U.S., this paper will investigate the use of Broad AusE by AHH artists as a tool to express their hip hop identity and membership within the Australian hip hop community. As past research has suggested, AHH artists exhibit predominantly AusE (including broad) phonological features in their rapping because of a desire to identify with young Australians, and also a desire to express their Australian identity and distinguish themselves from their US counterparts. Taking this into account, it is hypothesised in this study that:

AHH artists use an exaggerated Australian accent (Broad AusE) when performing, and a less exaggerated (Standard AusE) accent when not in performance mode.

4. Methodology

The method for data gathering I used is based on the Trudgill (1983) model used in O’Hanlon’s 2006 study. O’Hanlon used 5 phonological variables, such as the (A) vowel, found in words such as ‘can’t’, ‘path’, ‘rather’. She looked for these sounds in 30 hip hop songs and 30 non hip hop songs. Each sound had two or three variants: there was the standard Australian, the American and in 2 cases a broad Australian variant. For this study I gathered data using the two variables that had a standard Australian variant and a broad Australian variant. I collected data from two AHH artists; recorded data from one single released by each artist and one interview recording for each artist. I recorded the number of times I heard each variable, and then which variant of that variable was used by the artist.

5. Data

This study collected data from two songs by two different AHH artists:
1. The Hilltop Hoods: ‘The Hard Road (Restrung)’
2. Pegz: ‘Back Then’

These artists were chosen because of their contrast in performance style - the Hilltop Hoods being aggressive and energetic whereas Pegz is more laidback, having a relaxed delivery and flow - and because both are considered successful artists in the Australian hip hop community, having released multiple records and hit singles. The interviews used in this study were downloaded from the Triple J Radio website (http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/).

The two phonological variables compared in the songs versus the radio interviews were:

**(OE) vowel, found in words like boat, no, groan**
- [au] Broad AusE
- [ou] Standard AusE

**(AY) vowel, found in words like right, like, climb**
- [ɔi] Broad AusE
- [aI] Standard AusE

A number of points were taken into consideration when analysing the data (based on O’Hanlon’s (2006) study):

1. Words such as ‘I’ and ‘my’ often appear in an unstressed and therefore reduced form in speech and singing due to sentence prosody. In these cases, the vowels are not recorded as a possible (AY) variable. This is because vowel reduction in unstressed syllables is a natural speech process (Roca & Johnson 1999) and so would not constitute linguistic modification of the sort being investigated.
2. The variables that appear in the choruses of the songs were counted only once per song, in order to avoid repetition.
3. ‘Samples’ (recordings which are lifted from other pieces and placed in a new song) were ignored in the counting process for several reasons. Firstly, samples are generally not performed by the song’s artist, and secondly the voice is unidentifiable (thus it could belong to an American performer).

### 6. Results

The data gathered from the song by, and interview of, The Hilltop Hoods are consistent and support the hypotheses of this study. Out of 14 variables of the (OE) vowel, the Broad AusE variant was used over 70% of the time in the song, and out of again 14 variables of the (OE) vowel in the interview, Broad AusE was
used less than 15% of the time. Similarly with the (AY) vowel, out of 17 variables in the song, over 80% were Broad AusE, whereas in the interview, out of 17 variables, less than 24% were Broad AusE variants.

The data from the song and interview by Pegz show a similar pattern to that of The Hilltop Hoods, but to a slightly lesser extent. This pattern still, however, supports the hypothesis. Out of 12 possible (OE) variables in the song, almost 67% were of the Broad AusE variant, whereas in the interview, out of 31 possible variables, the Broad AusE variant was used only 16% of the time. Out of 18 possible (AY) variables in the song, almost 67% were Broad AusE variants, and in the interview, out of 18 variables, less than 35% were the Broad AusE variant.

These results are summarised in Table One below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(OE) Vowel Possible Variants</th>
<th>[e]_Broad AusE</th>
<th>[e]_Standard AusE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Hilltop Hoods - The Hard Road (Boasting) (5:35)</td>
<td>44 10 74.42% 4 28.57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(AY) Vowel Possible Variants</td>
<td>[e]_Broad AusE</td>
<td>[e]_Standard AusE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17 4 88.57% 2 11.76%</td>
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<td>Hilltop Hoods Interview (6:49)</td>
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<td>[e]_Broad AusE</td>
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<td>95 2 94.79% 12 62.77%</td>
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<td>(AY) Vowel Possible Variants</td>
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<td>Pegz - Bank First (8:26)</td>
<td>(OE) Vowel Possible Variants</td>
<td>[e]_Broad AusE</td>
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<td>(AY) Vowel Possible Variants</td>
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<td>12 3 94.67% 0 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pegz Interview (1:25)</td>
<td>(OE) Vowel Possible Variants</td>
<td>[e]_Broad AusE</td>
<td>[e]_Standard AusE</td>
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<td>31 5 84.43% 26 85.17%</td>
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<td>(AY) Vowel Possible Variants</td>
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<td>26 9 34.78% 12 85.17%</td>
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Table 1: Results of phonological analysis

Though the results varied slightly between the two artists investigated, a similar pattern appears in both cases. It appears that there is a tendency by AHH artists (certainly the ones studied in this paper) to exaggerate their speech during performances, showing high levels of Broad AusE pronunciation. However, in regular conversational speech, in this case speech recorded during radio interviews, the artists tend to use standard AusE pronunciation more commonly than Broad AusE. These findings are very interesting and lend support to the hypothesis proposed in this paper. Alim (2002) may attribute these findings to his argument that language is used by hip hop artists to construct an identity of ‘street-consciousness’, and that in fact there is a greater presence of non-standard (including AAVE) grammatical and phonological features in the rapping of hip hop.
hop artists than there is in their natural speech (Alim 2002). Though Alim’s (2002) study was based on US artists, his argument is based on similar principles to those of AHH artists. Both US and Australian hip hop artists use language as a tool to construct identities.

7. Discussion

This project was undertaken to further study issues of identity and hip hop, but with a more localised Australian perspective, building on the small amount of research previously carried out in this area in Australia. This study suggests there is a trend by members of the Australian hip hop community to express their affiliation, their belonging amongst the community by using a localised/broad AusE accent, even if it means that this pronunciation style needs to be adopted. An interesting point about the findings of this study is that this phenomenon is a contradiction of the hip hop philosophy of ‘keeping it real’ (O’Hanlon 2006). In the case of AHH artists, the data found in this study suggest that they are making a conscious decision to use broad AusE during performances, and standard AusE pronunciation during normal speech. This suggests that, in order to connect with their audience and to express their hip hop identity through rapping, the artists are essentially not being true to themselves, and hence are not ‘keeping it real’.

Though this study does show a consistent pattern, the sample size and data recording techniques could be improved upon. For example, one could analyse data on more phonological sounds, and gather more music samples and more recordings of the artist’s everyday speech. Another improvement could be that instead of using interview recordings of artists, one-on-one interaction with the artists could provide more substantial results. Instead of recording just the data of phonological sounds, one could also investigate the content of the lyrics of AHH artists. With regard to the data recording in this study, it would also have been beneficial to have had a second opinion, comparing the findings with another data collector to ensure the validity of these results.

8. Conclusion

This paper suggests that Australian hip hop artists use language as a tool to construct identities. There seems to be a trend in the Australian hip hop community among its members to express their affiliation, their belonging amongst the community by using a localised/broad AusE accent, even if it means that this pronunciation style needs to be adopted.

As mentioned by Cutler (2007), further study needs to be done in regards to hip hop language (HHL) use in everyday interaction, the regional language variation that local hip-hop scenes have spawned around the USA and
worldwide, the role of gender in hip-hop culture and language, and the processes of identity formation among hip hoppers.

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References
Foreign-trained versus British-trained: Exploring the identity of non-Australian trained medical professionals in the Australian print media

ALINA SULLIVAN*

Abstract

In view of an escalating need for foreign-trained health professionals in Australia today, social issues related to migrant doctors have become salient in the Australian media. The aim of this paper was to analyse the ways in which the identity of a medical professional is constructed in the context of news reports in the Australian print media. Moreover, it was sought to contrast the media representation of a foreign doctor from a non-western background with that of one from a British background. Ten newspaper articles from the Courier Mail, dating from 2005 to 2007, were analysed using narrative theory and critical discourse analysis. This analysis indicated that within the social category of overseas-trained doctors there is a good–evil opposition being created between foreign-trained and British-trained doctors. In addition it was observed that the constructed identities of foreign-trained doctors tend to have a dual nature. They are portrayed as the desired addition to the society through government programs on one hand and as the villain that the same-said society should be wary of on the other. The targeted audience is being presented with issues of ethnicity, religion, social heritage and country of origin as the main components of the identity of a migrant doctor.

1. Introduction

Medicine is rapidly becoming a multicultural realm characterised by a high level of mobility among healthcare professionals on an international scale. Foreign-trained doctors (FTD), defined as medical professionals who obtained their primary medical qualifications outside Australia (Han and Humphreys 2005), play an imperative role in solving labour shortages and will increasingly continue to do so in tomorrow’s aging societies of the receiver countries, such as Australia (Ray, Lowell, and Spencer 2006). Australia exhibits a strong need for healthcare workers, particularly in rural areas. Therefore, government policies are seen as more inclined to ease the migration process for FTDs in comparison to other western countries, making the country a more preferred destination for such migrants (Ray et al. 2006).

The main issues arising from that situation are the integration of FTDs, on the one hand, and the dilemma of their retention on the other (Han and Humphreys
The need for the integration of FTDs is highlighted in the literature (Ray, Lowell and Spencer 2006), and the main salient elements identified as pertinent to integration include race and ethnicity, physical features, social and political heritage, religion, ancestry, country of origin, language skills and the existence of stereotypes linked to migrant workers in general (Price et al. 2005; Bhopal 2001). All these can be observed to represent parts of the social identity of a FTD. Therefore, this identity is anchored in their social role, the socially recognisable category of a doctor. It is formed during the communication processes FTDs engage in, and is based upon the specific expectations related with that identity (Hecht, Jackson and Pitts 2005: 31–32). On the basis of that identity, FTDs have been found to suffer the following social consequences and diverging communicative actions: discrimination on the basis of foreign-sounding names (Bhopal 2001), harassment by patients and managers, and patients being reluctant to consult a FTD, for instance, “I don’t want to see that yellow doctor” (Han and Humphreys 2005). As a result, quality of care and retention are affected (Napoles-Springer, Santoyo, Houston, Perez-Stable and Stewart 2005). Therefore there is a call for more research on the community perceptions of FTDs and on the cultural component in medical encounters, in order to elaborate strategies FTDs can use to be successful (Napoles-Springer et al. 2005). However, to create a basis for these, a thorough understanding of how the identity of a FTD is formed, and perhaps the underlying reasons of its salient traits, is needed.

Media culture, embracing a variety of media, has become imperative in understanding modern society, dominated by its omnipresence and universal commercial traits (Kellner 1995: 5–6). Media texts have the power to influence social opinions, and at the same time, the representational and conceptual tools used to create these media texts are aimed at audiences and therefore construct narratives that audiences are familiar with and are prepared to hear (Selby and Cowdery 1995: 14). The area of analysing media discourse is central in analysing how meanings are co-constituted in the interaction between media texts and the audience (Arundale 2006; Hall 1997: 19).

The aim of this study is, therefore, to explore how the identity of a FTD is created and reflected in the Australian print media by looking at the components of the stories and the positions of power and dominance established in those stories. The study seeks to compare the positions of FTD and British trained doctors (BD). Firstly the paper will present the method used to collect the data. Secondly, the theoretical framework applied and the results obtained will be discussed. Finally, the paper will conclude that the identity of a foreign-trained medical professional, as constructed in the news narratives, is complex and not static, albeit the main trends identified seem to be bearing more and more negative connotations as the higher
temporal narrative of the progression of the topic is developing in the discourse of news.

2. Method

In order to research the social category of a doctor as projected through an outlet of Australian media, a corpus was formed (Goddard 2006: 2, 15). The data was collected from the print-media database Factiva. The Courier Mail was searched using a number of combinations of various keywords, with the combinations “foreign-trained doctors” and “British doctors” proving to be most efficient; the second formulation was modified because the combination “British trained doctors” was not yielding results. In total there were ten articles included in the corpus for detailed analysis, dating from 2005 to 2007. More specifically, there were seven articles containing FTD as the main focus, and four articles focusing on BD for the Courier Mail (see list of articles in Appendix 1). In addition, The Australian was also searched and two sets of data formed, comprising eight FTD-related and three BD-related articles respectively. This second data set from The Australian was examined, and in the final stage of analysis the findings from the FTD-related data set were contrasted with observations made regarding the BD-related data set (see list of articles in Appendix 2).

3. Analysis of the data

3.1 Theoretical framework

The analysis of the articles collected in the corpus was carried out using narrative theory and the critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework. Narratives organise smaller units of media texts, comprising signs, into chronological and causal chains of events that facilitate creating a mental meaning and therefore are central to cognition, interpreting and intertextuality (Thwaites, David and Mules 1994: 113; Ryan 2004: 3, 38). Within the structure of a media narrative, a number of characters can be distinguished as operating and interacting, which, being conceptualised by Propp, constitute a set of functions in the narrative (Lacey 2000: 51). The analysis of these can provide an insight into potential narrative building strategies behind news stories (Fulton 2005: 218). As a result, Propp’s functions were included in the analysis. Furthermore, the data examined in this paper forms part of the discourse of news, and its interpretation needs to address the linguistic choices and their pertinence to meaning construction in the narrative (Fulton 2005: 245). The CDA framework is recognised as one of the main mediums for studying the linguistic
components of media texts in their relation to society (Garrett and Bell 2000: 5–6). The main focus of CDA is upon analysing how social and political inequalities are manifested and how power relations are enacted in social cultures (Wooffitt 2005: 137–138), making it very relevant to the current research.

3.2 Results and discussion

Every article examined in the corpus represents a manufactured news story that appears to pursue the goal of informing its audience of important developments regarding domestic issues, particularly in the area of healthcare. Therefore, these articles appear to be objective, informative “hard” news items (Fulton 2005: 226). However, they also represent narratives, constructed on the basis of news gathering methodologies within a commercial newspaper establishment and destined for consumption by a particular type of audience. Therefore, a conventional story template, which can be easier to sell to the mass audience, can be observed to form and reoccur throughout the news articles in both sections of the primary corpus regarding FTD and BD (Fulton 2005: 221, 246).

3.2.1 Foreign-trained doctors

Article A1, reproduced below, from the section of the corpus of articles on “Foreign-trained doctors” is an example of possible trends in the ways the identity of a FTD are represented.

**Posters urge race respect**
ANTI-racism signs have been erected at Bundaberg Base Hospital in a bid to stop racial abuse of foreign-trained doctors.
Acting district manager Monica Seth revealed there had been several incidents at the hospital where people had made "disgusting racial comments" to medical staff.
The hospital’s controversial former director of surgery, Dr Jayant Patel, was trained in India and the US.
"Racial abuse against our staff will not be tolerated under any circumstances,”
Ms Seth said. "It is not only offensive, it is an offence.
"All patients in Bundaberg Base Hospital are treated according to their clinical needs but if a patient refuses to be treated by a particular doctor, they are free to seek clinical care at another facility."
Ms Seth said if patients had concerns about the qualifications of any medical staff member they needed to raise those concerns with the hospital’s executive.
"We are putting up posters in all areas advising patients and clients that racism is not tolerated here and we expect our patients to treat our medical staff with the respect they deserve," she said. (J. Watt, *Courier Mail*, 30 June 2005)

The narrative opens from the first sentence. The state of equilibrium is broken and the reader is immediately exposed to the problem. The state of equilibrium was the state of affairs before the “racial abuse” took place. Now, the disruption in the state of affairs has to be recognised: it came from an official person by the name of Monica Seth in paragraph 3. The use of the name can be potentially strategic in creating an association between the event and an individual person rather than an institution, making the story more “human” (Fulton, 2005: 237). Furthermore, there is an attempt to reinstate the equilibrium by putting the anti-racism posters up by the institution the official belongs to. By examining the narrative we can notice that the hero, the victim-hero, the text’s protagonist, can be identified straight away as “foreign-trained doctors”. Also, the villain seems to be introduced in the first paragraph of the story as pursuing the victim-hero and represented by those members of the public behind the “racial abuse”. However, the position of the villain, from the point of view of process–participant interaction, is of interest, as the actual agent is omitted and the individuality of the apparent villain is overcome by the affiliation with the wider community (Fairclough 2001: 101). As the story develops, it can be noted that it is the actions of the villain that are condoned in paragraph 3 and not the public itself. That strengthens the position of the villain in the text. Other characters emerging in the narrative are the helpers, the hospital officials, represented by Ms Seth, whose role is to assist the hero in restoring the equilibrium. On the first glance they seem to take a defensive stand against the villain and to help the victim-hero. This can be seen in the following textual features: declarative statements of high modality (“it is not only offensive, it is an offence”); extreme rhetoric (“disgusting racial comments”); the frequent use of the word “racial”, potentially bearing negative rather than positive connotations, which was mentioned five times in this short 196 word article.

A close examination also reveals that the alleged victim-hero is mentioned only once, albeit in an advantageous end-focus syntactical position (Van Dijk 1993: 277). In addition, the last argument in the whole piece seems to focus on the helpers themselves, not on the victim-hero. Thus, the use of the pronoun “we” is attracting attention to those behind the resolution of the disruption of equilibrium, the hospital institution (Van Dijk, 2003: 356). It also has to be noted that the use of the word “racism” is becoming significant: by reverting back into the middle of the article, we start to see that quite possibly the victim-hero is not a victim at all, but is in fact the whole reason behind the disruption occurring in the first place. Paragraph 4
introduces information about the “controversial Dr Jayant Patel”, who was trained in India. The introduction of that particular individual may have ideological consequences, affirming the view that the social order and its disruption are caused by an individual who is also a representative of a particular group in society (Fulton, 2005: 237–238), providing the justification for the actions of the initial villain, the angry public. Therefore, the dual identity of the FTD emerges.

The narrative template in which that identity is constructed is determined by the discourse angle chosen by the authors behind the news stories. That angle is established by the headlines of the articles including: “Dr Death backlash”, “Doctor jobs for foreign slaves”, “Time for a reality check” and “Check on 37 foreign doctors”. They serve as plot summaries and prime the audience into the expected format of moral panic in which the FTD identity is embedded (Fulton 2005: 233–234). Taking into consideration the already high newsworthiness value of healthcare issues, the element of an apparent threat to the social fabric potentially increases the magnitude of the news item, setting it high on the agenda of story selection and presentation by the newspaper (Fulton 2005: 221).

Therefore, the swaying portrayal of the figure of FTD as an impure victim-hero continues throughout the higher order narrative of the news items covering the topic, with attributes of the villain becoming more and more prominent. As a logical development within the narrative structure of the moral panic, the potential threat needs to be resolved in some way. That is realised by the fact that the hidden hero of an Australian-born doctor is emerging more and more in the news narrative. Thus, in article A2, paragraph 1 (Appendix 1): “foreign-trained doctors, even those just with ethnic names” hints at those who suffer from the existence of this villain side of a FTD identity. The lexical items used in stories become stronger and can be perceived as more negative and damaging to the social status of FTDs: “suspicion”, “skepticism”, “foreign slaves”, “debacle”, “rogue”, “controversial”; “incompetent”; use of negative declarative statements: “they do not have the skills”, “quality control nightmare”, “Nigerian doctor still flummoxed by the branding of Australian medications”; use of demonstratives to highlight the position of FTD in relation to the rest of society: “these foreign doctors”; use of pronouns: “they come from afar”; racially charged adjectives: “33-year old Indian”, “Indian born-and-educated”, “Nigerian doctor”; religion related adjectives: “Muslim doctors”. In addition, a Levi-Strauss’s binary opposition of positive and negative connotations (Lacey 2000: 73), can be seen to be being created in terms of country of origin, so we have: “50 per cent of foreign doctor imports are from so-called developing nations” and whilst “they” used to arrive from “UK and Western Europe”, “they” are now arriving from “India, China, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East” (see A5, A6 in Appendix 1).
Therefore, with the purpose of solving the crisis that is causing public concern, it seems quite justified for more direct official interventions, regulations and policing to occur and for that group of people to be controlled by an entity such as the Australian government, which would exert its power to control that group (Van Dijk 1993: 263). There is evidence of a possible presupposition being formed that such control is in fact a positive element and that the group should not oppose it, since the FTD bears the aspect of a villain in the social fabric: “doctors can be controlled because they know that if they complain they will be sent back overseas” (A3, Appendix 1); the outlining of the problem of “how did Australia become so reliant on imported medical workforce” (A6, Appendix 1); and that there is a need to “drop off the reliance on foreign doctors” (A5, Appendix 1).

3.2.2 British doctors corpus

In the light of the position developed in the case of FTD from non-UK, non-Western countries, it becomes important to examine how medical professionals of British origin are portrayed in the discourse of news, in the same newspaper and targeting the same audience. Rather than being two separate narratives, the stories featuring FTD and BD seem to be intertwined. The disruption of the equilibrium of the narrative can be seen as being encapsulated by “the recruitment of a particular overseas trained doctor” that caused a very serious disruption in the state of affairs of the whole Queensland health department (C1, Appendix 1). However, the villain does not seem to be the implied figure of Jayant Patel, whose name is omitted altogether from the sentence; it is the “foreign doctor” that the focus goes to. Peter Beattie here is a seeker hero who is seeking the “holy grail” or the princess, Propp’s most sought-after character, manifested by the “British doctors” (Lacey 2000: 51–52). The fact that the word “trained” does not appear to be used in the case of British health professionals may also be significant, as it takes the focus off the whole issue of experience and skill, even being salient when it comes to this social group. The fact that they are being sought after increases their value, their social capital in the media texts, and assigns them a vital role in the moral panic format of the news narrative. Thus they must be skilled, experienced and the opposite of everything other FTDs were portrayed to be: therein lies their importance to the seeker hero trying to solve the health crisis and restore the equilibrium in the health system. So, expressions like “poach British doctors”; increases their value. Also in article C2, we can see that, unlike the case of the narrative of FTD articles, the last argument is a call for better conditions for British doctors: “smart career move for British health professionals”; “need to fast-track”; “boost recruitment” and “great for recruitment” (C2, Appendix 1).
Their position in the society and the positive connotations associated with it are allowing for higher echelons of power to carry out certain actions in relation to BD, just as was observed in the case of FTD. However, the kinds of actions seen as justified are very different from those in the case of FTD. Thus British doctors should be made exempt from sitting the exam (C4, Appendix 1), with the authoritarian “medical industry source” arguing the validity of such actions by markedly saying “it is not meant to be racial discrimination, it is meant to be competency discrimination”. So it can be noted that the villain element of the FTD identity is quite salient in the narratives of the articles that are centred on the British doctors. Thus, there is indication that a good and evil opposition, albeit not absolute or clear cut, is being created between the two identities, FTD and BD. It can be seen especially in the rhetoric used in the case of FTD: “stringent checks”, whereby they have to be stopped and “numbers dropped” versus “need to fast-track recruitment” for BD and a call to destroy any other potential villains that come in the way, like “red tape” for instance. Also, the reference to an “embarrassing saga”, emphasising the crisis and the FTD’s central role in it, may be increasing the attractiveness of the solution of achieving more BD.

Analysing both sets of data in terms of the illocutionary audience constructed by the narratives and the textual feature choices making up the fabric of those narratives, the observation can be made that the narrative does not seem to speak to the audience in a special voice, but in a public idiom, a language they can understand, that belongs to the everyday life and that shapes their reality. This conveys a certain power to the meanings created by the stories described above, translating into an ability to exert ideological pressure among the actual perlocutionary audience and to influence the way in which the real world and real people are perceived by the readers. However, it has to be taken into account that, as a source of public idiom, the *Courier Mail* newspaper, examined in the present study, targets a particular perlocutionary audience of middle class people with a wide age range and is characterised by “watch dog” journalism. This may influence how the identities of FTD and BD are constructed in its discourse of news. In that light, examining the similar data sets collected from the *Australian* newspaper, which is aimed at a more conservative, nation-wide audience, it can be concluded that the trends identified in the *Courier Mail* data regarding the construction of FTD identity seem to continue and the binary opposition between FTD and BD is preserved, despite a different demographic (Fulton 2005: 221–222, 244–247). This can be indicative of the magnitude and the universality of the topic in Australian society and opens up a potentially important area for further research.
4. Conclusion

The data and the analysis conducted suggest that the position FTDs are assigned to by the news discourse within the Australian media is markedly less powerful and more restricted, in comparison with that of the BD; this creates a situation of inequality whereby solidarity within the social category of overseas-trained professionals is affected. Foreign doctors tend to be presented as the dominate group, influenced by the higher status of their British counterparts and also by the justified interventions on behalf of the powerful government entities which openly exert influence upon them. The observation made indicated that, despite FTD friendly policies and retention initiatives on behalf of the government, the climate reflected in the media narratives is highlighting the saliency of race, ethnicity, religion, social heritage and of country or origin in relation to the projection of FTD identity in the media. The narrative template constructed around that identity is formulaic in nature, and the news items selected from the information pool to be presented within that template are subjected to the implicit agenda of the newspaper, as a media entity, which is driven by the ever-increasing process of commodification of news reporting (Fairclough 1995: 10). Therefore, it can be asserted that the discourse of news bares elements of hegemony and the way the news is presented constitutes a social phenomenon affecting the lives of real people in their everyday interactions. Therefore, there is a need for more in-depth research to be conducted on the effects of that phenomenon on audiences, the beliefs the audiences hold about the social groups in question and the consequences of these on medical encounters.

It has to be acknowledged that this paper had a number of limitations. There was no consideration given to alternative readings of the media texts and the analysis was not exhaustive. Also, more articles could be included in the corpus and the narrative/CDA analysis could be further widened. Notwithstanding that, in order to improve the understanding of the topic, the identified potential trends can serve as a basis to elaborate interview questions and conduct ethnographic interviewing in order to compare and contrast the ways FTDs are portrayed in the media discourse and the opinions held by the population in different demographic regions.

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Appendix 1: Articles from *Courier Mail* and *Sunday Mail*

**A. List of articles focusing on Foreign Trained Doctors (FTDs)**
A2: Dr Death backlash, 19 June 2005.
A4: Time for a reality check. 19 March 2006.
A6: International terror has hit home, T. McLean, 7 July 2007.

**C. List of articles focusing on British Trained Doctors (BDs)**
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Troy Vinson
Some lexical variations of Australian Aboriginal English 1

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‘Bogan’: Polite or not? Cultural implications of a term in Australian slang 7

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