

# Gender & Sexuality

LCD 205: Sociolinguistics  
Queens College, CUNY

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# Outline

- LENS/MLD
  - No tests in the reports
  - Must finish. Not close browser before
  - Email me notes
- Individual Speech
- Gender & Sexuality

Lecture

# **GENDER, SEXUALITY AND LANGUAGE**

# Market Forces

- A similar kind of explanation is that men and women tend to have different social networks.
  - Different employment patterns for men and women created stronger local networks than women.
    - Men tended to work in shipyards, mines etc.
    - Women often worked outside the community or stayed home.
- The vernacular norm is therefore more strongly reinforced in men than women.

# Market Forces

## Milroy (1980)

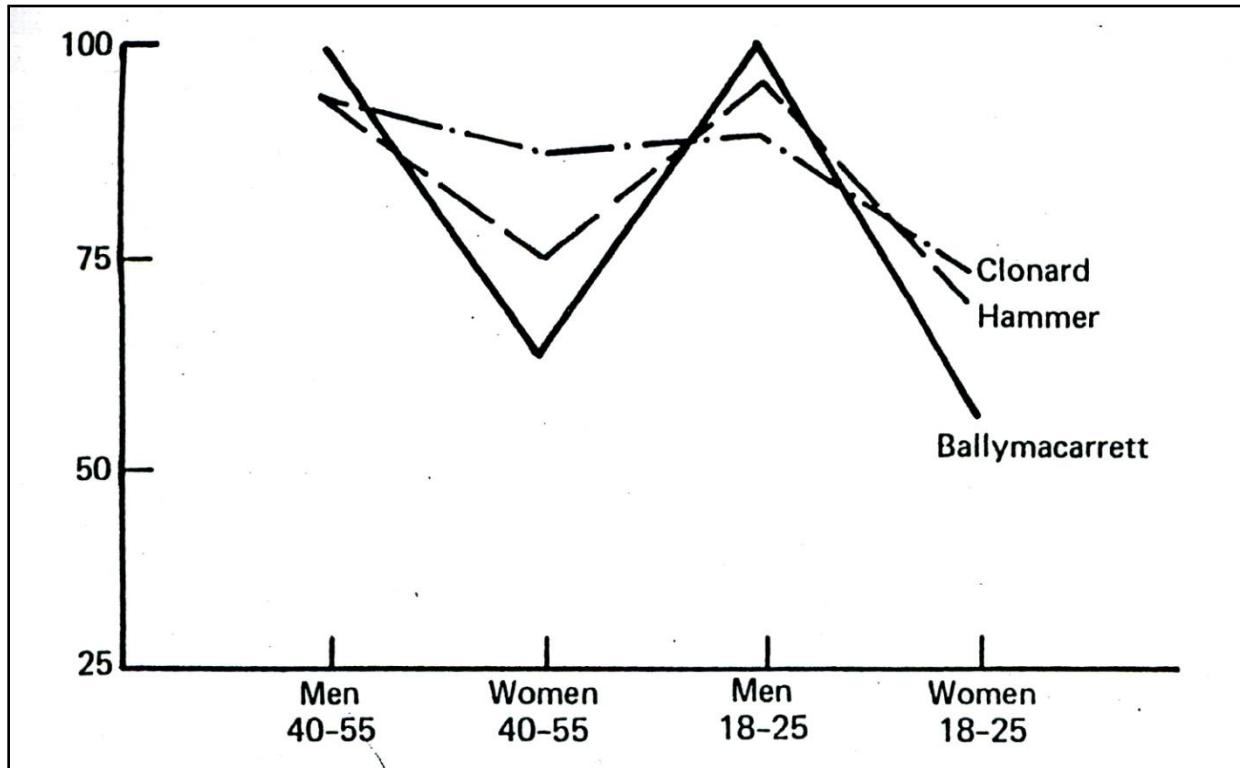
- Significant sex difference only in Ballymacarrett.
- Unlike in the other two communities, unemployment was low. Men worked in the shipyards together and therefore had a *stronger social network* than in the other two communities.
- So, the *sex difference* was greatest where *the network strength* is greatest.



# Market Forces

## Milroy (1980)

- A study of 3 Belfast neighborhoods. Percentage of low vowel (e) in three communities.



# Power

- Trudgill (1972)
  - Women's social status is less secure than men's. Women are less able to achieve prestige through the labor market
  - Women are more likely than men to be evaluated based on their appearance
  - Hence, women tend toward prestige speech as a way of claiming social status

# Leading Change

- Laxing of /u/ before /l/
  - Utah (Di Paolo 1988)
  - Texas (Bailey et al 1993)
  - Young women use more than young men
- Schwa backing
  - Detroit
  - More common in Burnout girls than guys



# Leading Change

- NEAR-SQUARE merger
  - New Zealand
  - More common in WC/LMC women than WC/LMC men
- Argentine <ll>
  - Anecdotally
  - More common in women

# Exceptions

- There are exceptions to
  - Women using more prestige variants
  - Women leading language change

# Exceptions

- ʕamiy:a Arabic v. fusʕħa Arabic
- Men use more fusʕħa than women
  - Iraq (Bakir 1986)
    - [k] ~ [tʃ]
    - CuCiC ~ nCiCaC
    - ʕan ~ ∅
  - Cairo (Haeri 1994)
    - [t d tʕ dʕ] ~ [tʃ dʒ tʃʕ dʒʕ]

# Exceptions

- Singh (2001)
  - Male speech
    - lexically richer
    - phrases used tend to be longer.
  - Female speech
    - shorter sentence structures
    - more repetitive in its use of lexical items
    - nouns and pronouns interchangeably
    - more verbs

# Exceptions

- Kulick (1992): Gapun, New Guinea
  - Traditional variety, Taiap, being displaced by more broadly spoken and more prestigious Creole, Tok Pisin.
- Men leading the change.
  - Brought in by men returning from work on plantations.

# Exceptions

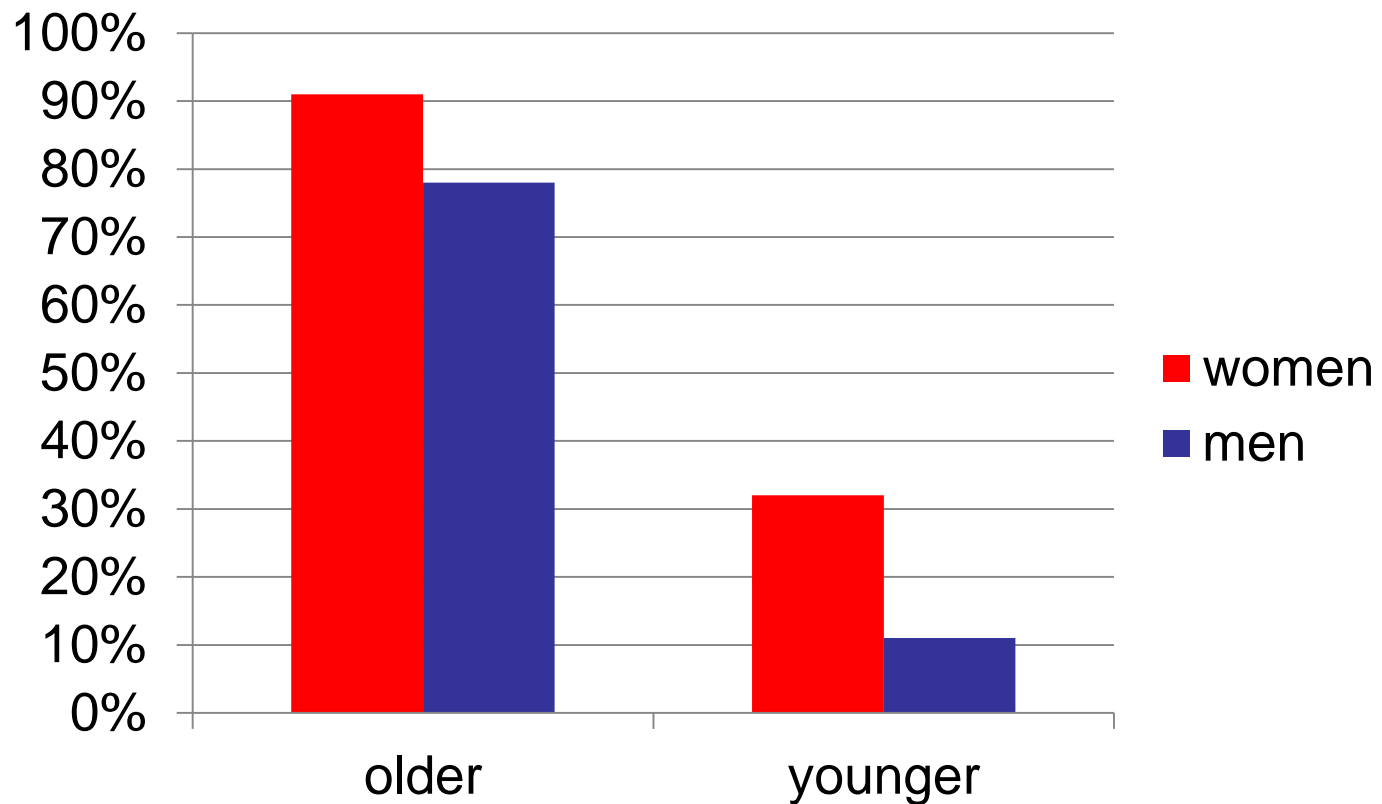
- Zentella (1997)
- Study of Spanish and English among Puerto Ricans in NY.
- Men and boys
  - Men leading the change to English
  - English more prestigious variety than Puerto Rican Spanish in NY
  - greater contacts outside the family and neighborhood
  - more contact with English
- Women and girls
  - more restricted to the house and neighborhood
  - more contact with Spanish.

- Oiartzun Basque: “Second vowel deletion”
- Middle aged woman
  - /aʊreko+ak/ > [aʊrekuk]  
before +pl  
‘our forefathers’
- Younger male
  - /frente+a+n/ > [frentian]  
front def in  
‘across the street’

## 4. Exceptions

### Oiartzun Basque: “Second vowel deletion”

- Second vowel deletion by age group and sex





- Examples
  - Arab men use more fusʿha
  - Spanish men in NYC use more English
  - Young men in Basque use more prestige variants
  - Men in PNG use more Tok Pisin
- So...
  - Market forces don't always lead to women favoring standard forms
  - “powerlessness” doesn't necessarily translate into women/girls tending toward prestige forms
- Recent work tends to be suspicious of these general explanations and look at language and gender at a more local level.

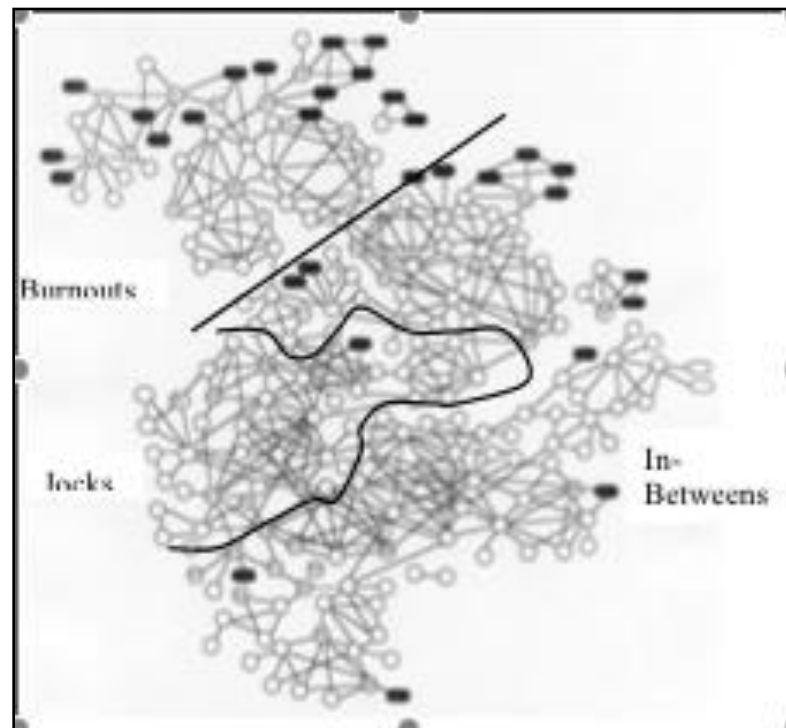
# Synthesis

- Recall Eckert (1989, 2000)
  - Jocks
  - Burnouts
- Different patterns of interaction among boys and girls.
  - Boys
    - jocks and burnouts tended to interact somewhat.
  - Girls
    - sharper division
    - Neither group wanted to be mistaken for the other.
      - Jock girls: friendly, courteous, studious, nice
      - Burnout girls: tough, streetwise, experienced with sex and drugs.

# 5. Towards a synthesis

**Eckert (1989, 2000)**

Girls' network, Belten High



From Eckert (2005)

# Synthesis

## Eckert (1989, 2000)

- This social difference is reflected in the way that individual boys and girls use language.

/ai/ nucleus raising

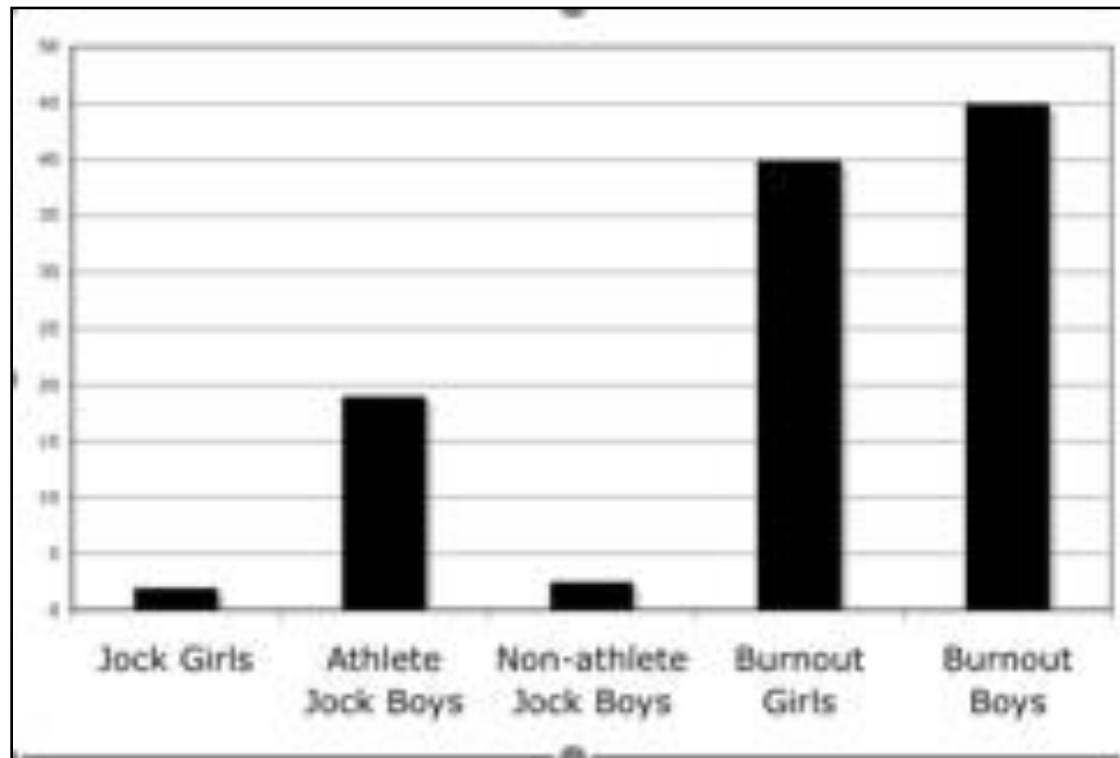
<b>Group</b>	<b>Factor weights</b>
Burnout girls	.79
Jock girls	.21
Burnout boys	.62
Jock boys	.29

Adapted from Eckert (2005)

# Synthesis

Eckert (1989, 2000)

Negative concord



Adapted from Eckert (2005)

- Eckert (1989) argues that both men and women want people to respect them.
  - Women have less power
    - Less easier to get respect directly
    - Get respect symbolically
      - Language
      - Dress
      - Actions

- Women's symbolic use of language
  - Not necessarily more frequent use of the prestige variants
  - Depends on context
  - Could use more prestige variants or could use less prestige variants
    - Just use more symbolic use of language

## Eckert (1989, 2000)

- This, then is consistent with evidence suggesting that women style shift more than men.

Norwich English: % non-standard [n] (Trudgill 1974)

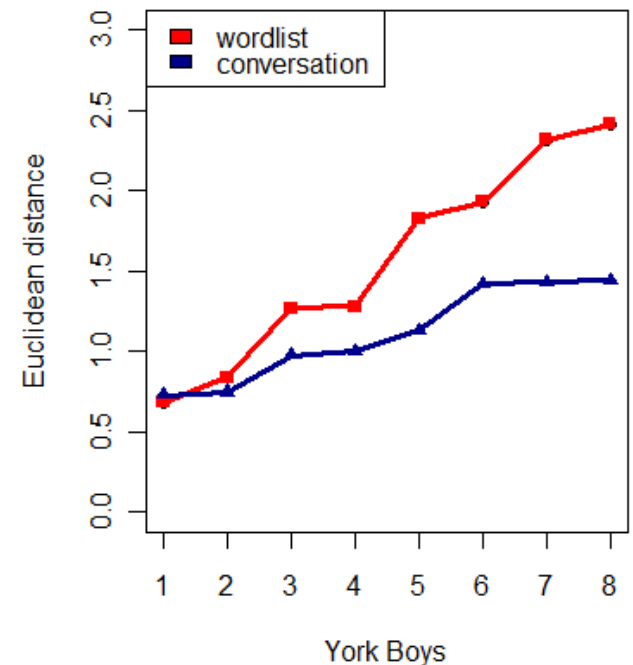
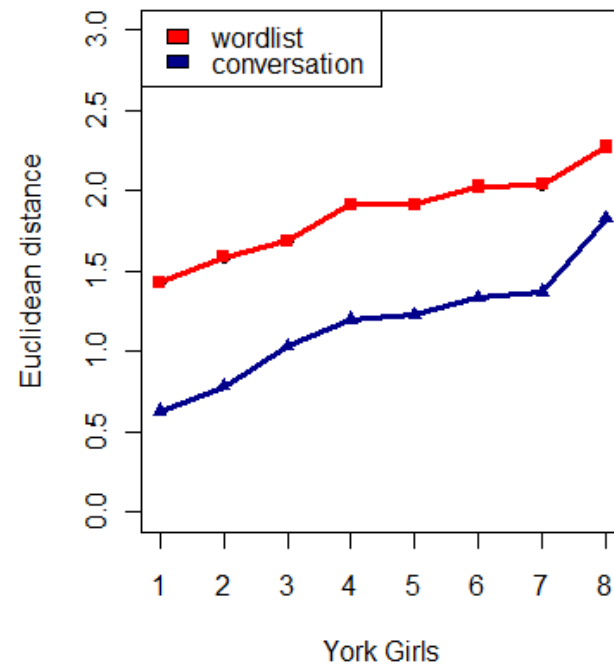
	word-list	casual	% difference
males	60	100	40
females	17	100	83



## Eckert (1989, 2000)

- This, then, is consistent with evidence suggesting that women style shift more than men.

- York GOAT vowels.



- In sum,
  - Women use language more symbolically
    - Due to lack of power
  - Difference also attributed to different social networks

- Women's language is characteristic of groups excluded from institutionalized varieties of male power (Lakoff 2004)
  - Women
  - Gay men
  - Academics
- Similar to AAVE being used by other marginalized groups, e.g. Asian Americans (Chun 2001)

- Does this mean that gays talk like women?
- What are the speakers doing? How would you characterize the way that they are talking?
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQavJ29rGg4>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIHi5Ka1Puo>

**SEXUALITY**

- What is sexuality?
- Can you tell someone's sexuality based off of their voice?

- Listen to the following audio. Would you be surprised to find out that this person is gay?
  - <https://youtu.be/VciMA6V7Wp0?t=10m6s>
  - <https://youtu.be/3bcRKtPNA-c?t=5m18s>
  - <https://youtu.be/rKCESXxzsEQ?t=3s>
  - <https://youtu.be/ZqCrbZ14kb8?t=10s>
- Do I sound Gay?
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R21Fd8-Apf0>

# Sexuality

- Sexuality is a complicated thing
  - Force people into a binary/ternary system
    - Homosexual – (Bisexual) – Heterosexual
  - Ignores the variation across many different spectra
    - Sexual desire(for lack of a better word)
    - Gender
    - Others which I won't discuss



# Sexuality

- A more useful system is a quadrant, rather than single scale (such as the Kinsey scale)
  - X axis: Attraction to same/different gender
  - Y axis: having/lacking sexual desire
- Still doesn't work well with the people with non-normative gender identity

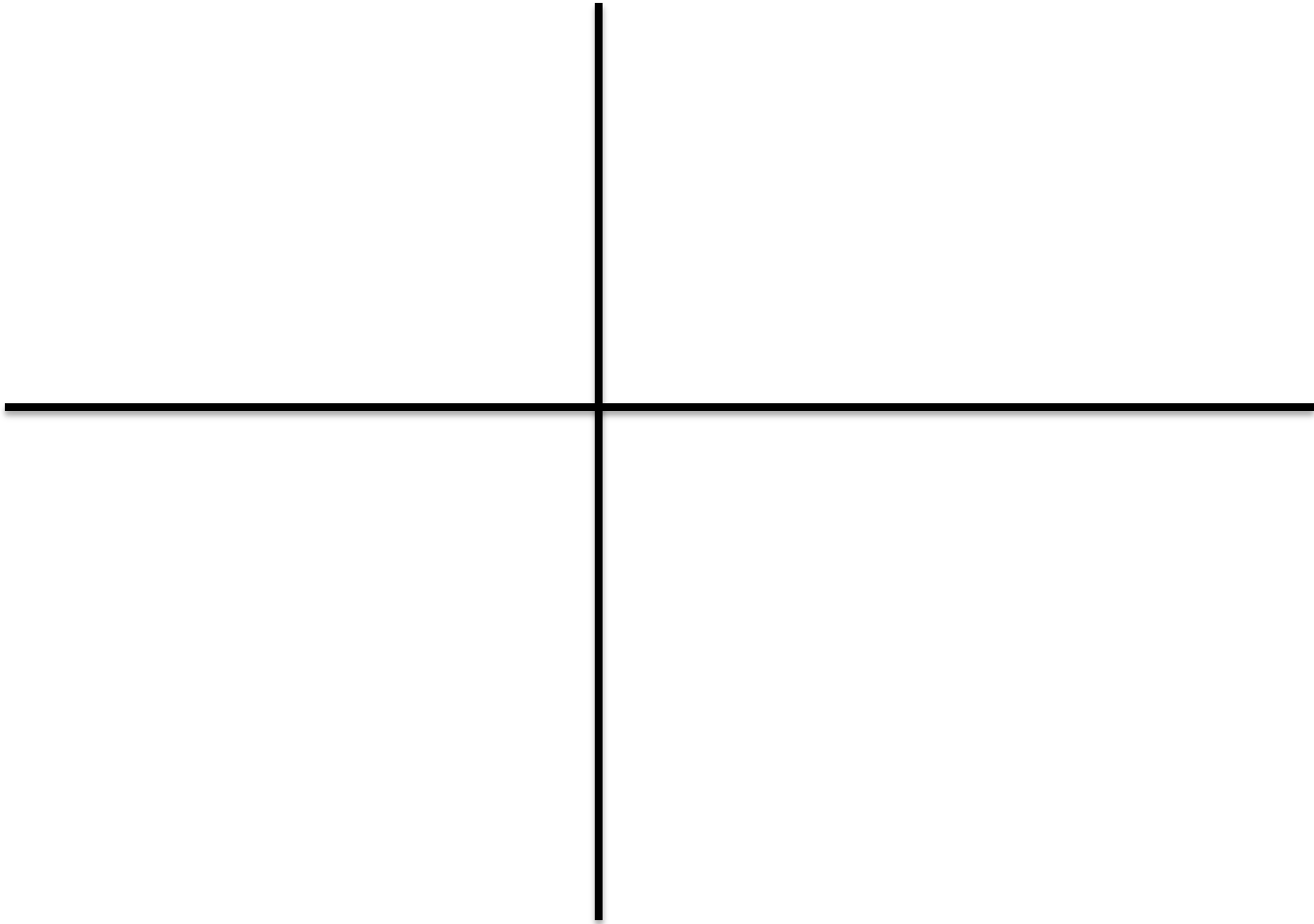
# Sexuality

Attraction to Same Gender

Presence of  
Sexual  
Desire

Absence of  
Sexual  
Desire

Attraction to Different Gender



# Sexuality

- In recent years there has been a number of articles on sexuality and language
  - Annual Conference on Lavender Linguistics at American University, Washington, D.C.
- Researchers have been looking to find what makes a “gay accent”
  - Many languages have a variety which is associated with homosexual men

# Sexuality

- What are some features of a voice that you might label as “sounding gay”?

# Sexuality

- Commonly identified aspects of a “gay accent”
  - Hyperarticulated/Lisped /s/
  - Hyperarticulation
  - A “non-regional” or “bicoastal” queer accent
  - Use of more local, regional vowels
  - Feminine

# Podésva 2004

- Case study of Heath, a gay medical student in CA
  - In professional settings
  - With friends
    - Falsetto
    - Wider pitch range
    - Longer, more audible word-final releases

# Sexuality

- It is still difficult to find one thing that makes a “gay accent”
- Why?
  - Not all gays speak “gay”
  - Not all gays “queen out” all the time

- It is more likely that there are variants used which index specific things for specific reasons.
  - A variant which indexes “excitement” might also index “gay”
  - “Healthy”
  - “Happy”



# Variables and Indices

- Indices of Sexuality
  - Are there any variants that are specifically associated with a sexuality?
    - Homosexual men
    - Lesbian women
    - Heterosexual men
    - Heterosexual women

# Variables and Indices

- Just as everyone use different masculine/feminine variables to express (index) different things...
- When would you want to use a variable that is typically associated with a specific sexuality?