CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE LANGUAGE OF IDENTITY:
ANALYZING DISCOURSE IN A YOUTUBE VIDEO

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics

By

Carley Michelle Morgan

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The thesis of Carley Michelle Morgan is approved:

____________________________________________ _________________
Dr. Terrie Mathis       Date

____________________________________________ _________________
Alexandra Gerbasi, Ph.D.                 Date

____________________________________________ _________________
Guillermo Bartelt, Ph.D., Chair     Date

California State University, Northridge
DEDICATION

For David,

who brought my love to life,

and for whom I live to love.
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ABSTRACT

THE LANGUAGE OF IDENTITY:
ANALYZING DISCOURSE IN A YOUTUBE VIDEO

By

Carley Michelle Morgan

Master of Art in Linguistics

This thesis explores how individuals exhibit and construct identities in conversation. Language and speaking styles are used (un)intentionally by speakers to signal group affiliations. The first section briefly reviews the literature related to identity formation, including evidence of the plasticity of identity. The second section, the analysis, looks at the styles of two speakers engaged in conversation on a YouTube video. Both speakers construct identities that serve as markers of place affiliation, status, power, gender, age, and ethnicity. In addition, the speakers demonstrate internalized schemas related to salons, work, cheating, stories, and performance. The conclusion summarizes these findings and suggests additional aspects of the speakers’ identities that could be obtained from further research.

1 This thesis was funded in part by a grant from California State University, Northridge.
INTRODUCTION

The desire for personal identity, Schneider (2000) states, “has the greatest influence upon how an individual speaks” (p. 359). Although earlier studies focused on the effects of regional origin and status, these were unable to account for speech patterns among individuals who were considered members of one category yet utilized speech patterns of another.\(^2\) Thus origin and status represent group memberships that may or may not be internalized by the people they describe. Data such as place of birth, income, and education remain important to an analysis of identity, but they are used mainly as a tool for establishing which group norms are relevant for comparison. Once norms are established the analyst can determine whether an individual actively accepts or rejects membership in relevant groups. More importantly, static categories do not account for how individuals behave in relation to others. The “multifaceted and situationally contingent” aspect of identity (Huddy, 2001, p. 128) makes it impossible to pin down a single identity that covers all times and places; however, it reflects reality more accurately than the two-dimensional relationship between socioeconomic status (for example) and degree of utilization of language features. What has been found is that individual identity vacillates according to the meaning or importance the individual places on group membership, something that previous research was unable to predict. The analysis that follows uses diverse research from disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, social psychology, and political science to determine the extent to which individuals exhibit identity and how belief systems are enacted in conversation.

\(^2\) This well-documented phenomenon is represented in terms such as “talking white” or “putting on airs.”
IDENTITY FORMATION

“Who am I?” is a question asked in various ways by people of all ages and cultures. A more technical question might be “What is my identity?” According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), social identity is “those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging” (p. 16). Weaver (2001) expands on this, saying, “Generally, identification is based on recognition of a common origin or shared characteristics with another person, group, or ideal leading to solidarity and allegiance” (p. 242). Synthesizing these two quotes in simpler terms, identity is a collection of labels an individual adopts, based on perceived similarities, in order to show adherence to someone or something. Drass (1986) states that “the self can be conceptualized as a collection of identities organized into a hierarchy of salience or importance to the individual” (p. 295). This means that multiple identities exist within each person, with one or another identity coming to the fore depending on the situation. More specifically, as Howard (2000) notes, “Role identities are organized hierarchically, on the basis of their salience to the self and the degree to which we are committed to them, which in turn depends on the extent to which these identities are premised on our ties to particular other people” (p. 371). The stronger a person’s tie to a particular individual or group, the more committed s/he will be to the identity that tie requires. Identities that are preferred may be kept and those that conflict with norms may be discarded. For example, suppose John, a gay man, considers his relationship with his family to be very important, but they hold negative beliefs about people who are gay. In order for John to remain in close contact with them, he may de-emphasize or even hide

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3 Referenced in Goethals and Darley (1986, p. 32).
this aspect of his identity while in their presence. Referencing Tajfel, Holmes and
Meyerhoff (1999) state that “social identity theory holds that individuals’ social behavior
is a joint function of (a) their affiliation to a particular group identity that is salient at that
moment in the interaction, and (b) their interpretation of the relationship of one’s ingroup
to salient outgroups” (p. 177). Returning to the example, John’s decision to conceal or
reveal his sexual identity to his family will be determined by how he views the relative
importance of each identity when both identities are salient in an interaction.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) take this a step further with the term
Community of Practice (CofP), which they define as “an aggregate of people who come
together around mutual engagement in an endeavor” (p. 464). Furthermore, “[t]he
process of becoming a member of a CofP…involves learning. We learn to perform
appropriately in a CofP as befits our membership status” (Holmes and Meyerhoff, 1999,
p. 174). This means that an individual, in order to maintain their membership status, or
rise in the ranks, must perform according to the norms of the group. In other words,
accepting the identity of the group requires behavior modification. In another article,
Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) focus on the language aspects of CofP, saying that
“one can assume that the practice that unites these communities includes not only ways
of talking, but also activities, dress…, concerns, and other topics of talk” (p. 191).
Howard (2000) confirms this idea stating that “[a]t the most basic level, the point is
simply that people actively produce identity through their talk” (p. 372). According to
these authors, if an individual identifies with a particular social category, s/he will dress,
act, and, most importantly, talk in ways that will support their membership in the group.
Lane (2000) notes that “identity is located…in the dynamics of interactions between
individuals whose identities are reconstructed by daily experiences” (p. 352). Van Dijk (1997) takes this idea further, explaining that “[a]t all levels of discourse, we thus find the ‘traces’ of a context in which the social properties of the participants play a fundamental role, such as their gender, class, ethnicity, age, origin, position or other forms of group membership” (p. 20). Each of these citations includes the understanding that identity forms, not in isolation, but in relation to others. Thus the question becomes, for example, “Who am I when I am with my mother?” or “Who am I when I am with friends at school?” The question grows more complex the deeper we look. Bergvall (1999) writes about three aspects of identity: the innate, the achieved, and the ascribed, (p. 274). In other words, each person’s identity is composed of traits they are born with, traits they have selected, and traits imposed on them by others. Furthermore, since individuals and groups mutually affect one another, and new situations and acquaintances are constantly met with, the process of identity formation will continue indefinitely. Given that individuals occupy multiple Communities of Practice (e.g. family, work groups, teams), changing their behavior to fit, or oppose, a particular context, no single identity that is expressed can be generalized over all times and places. Therefore, the conclusions I make as to the participants’ identities based on the video are only claimed to hold in this and similar contexts.

As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999), Van Dijk (1997), and Howard (2000) state above, discourse, especially naturally-occurring discourse, will always contain clues to the identities projected by the speakers. Although the video is not a paragon of natural speech, the presence of informal speech patterns, such as interruptions, backchanneling,

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4 Kelli and Jamie are aware that they are, in a sense, performing for Kelli’s youtube.com viewers, a subject which is discussed in a later section.
and non-verbal language, still allows it to be useful for this analysis. Utilizing my own transcript (see Appendix) of a YouTube video, as well as the video itself, I attempt to reconstruct the identities of two speakers as they engage in conversation. The two interlocutors are Kelli, the owner of the YouTube channel where the video is posted, and Jamie, the non-paying customer. The analysis will begin with my claim as to the speakers’ location when they made the video and what this means for their place identity. Following this, I will discuss each speaker’s power and status, gender, age, ethnicity, and schemas. Although certain aspects of identity may seem obvious from watching the video, linguistic support based on the transcript and video will be given. The reason for this, as stated above, is that identity is context-dependent. It will become clear in the following pages that the speakers often try to convey identities that do not match their innate traits. In these cases, I rely on the transcript, the video, and outside resources to determine whether they are innate or achieved.

5 The video, entitled “Cutting Jamie’s Hair (1/12) Getting Wet,” was posted on April 29, 2010 to the YouTube channel KelliInTheRaw. All date-related analyses (e.g. age) are based on this date.
IDENTITY ANALYSIS

Geographic Location & Place Identity

According to Cuba and Hummon (1993), the “dwelling place,” whether home, neighborhood, community, or region, provides “a significant locus of sentiment and meaning for the self” (p. 111). This statement suggests that where a person lives has a strong impact on their overall identity. In terms of a CofP, individuals change the way they speak in order to attain (or reject) membership or higher status in a geographically-based group. In this case, the group could be Valley Girls, Californians, Southerners, etc. Each group has a perceived norm or set of norms that its members follow in order to remain part of the group. To find out whether or not Jamie and Kelli identify with their geographic location, I will first need to determine where the speakers were when the video was made. Once their geographic location has been found, I will analyze their place identities in relation to it.

Several lexical items provide clues for an analysis of the speakers’ location. One of the most telling appears in line 72 where Kelli says “Now I know there’s a bunch in Beaumont.” The assumption here is that Beaumont is the name of a city. The fact that she uses the city name alone indicates Kelli and Jamie are presently in the same state as the city of Beaumont (although not in Beaumont itself) and Jamie will infer the correct state so mentioning it is unnecessary. A search of U.S. maps shows only four states that contain a city named Beaumont: California, Kansas, Mississippi, and Texas. Three of these possibilities can be eliminated by looking at Kelli’s utterance in line 145 where she says “I went to mac yesterday.” There are many possible meanings attached to this sentence which Jamie could infer, all of which can be generalized as follows:
1) Kelli is using “to mac” as a verb
2) Kelli went to see a person she knows named Mac
3) Kelli went to a retail/restaurant location called Mac

Grice’s cooperative principle states that interlocutors follow a basic guideline such that, when they are engaged in a conversation, they will make their contribution “such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 33). The latter portion is most significant to this analysis. Although each is a reasonable interpretation, only one can be correct.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), “[o]f the various thoughts which the sentence uttered could be taken to represent, the hearer can eliminate any that are incompatible with the assumption that the speaker is obeying the co-operative principle and maxims (p. 34). The topic of conversation, or “accepted direction of the talk exchange,” just before the utterance was makeup. Assuming that Kelli is obeying the cooperative principle, we can conclude that “mac” is a place related to makeup. For my seminar paper I conducted an internet search of “mac, makeup.” The search turned up many results, but most of the top entries were related to the M.A.C. makeup company. This indicates the third option above, eliminating the others immediately. The company’s Web site, maccosmetics.com, includes a store location search capability. My search excluded department stores that don’t sell M.A.C. products exclusively (such as Macy’s stores) since Kelli explicitly states that she went “to mac” rather than “to buy mac.” My search of Mississippi locations returned no results, which brings the possible locations down to California, Kansas, and Texas. Kelli mentions in lines 60-62 that Beaumont also has “a lot that
Cajun and Creole there.” Wikipedia’s (2012) “Louisiana Creole People” entry includes a listing of regions of the U.S. with significant Creole populations, including East Texas and Los Angeles County, but nowhere in Kansas. The city of Beaumont in California lies about 80 miles from the center of Los Angeles and well outside the limits of the county. Furthermore, the Wikipedia (2012) entry for Beaumont, California, does not mention any significant Creole populations. Thus California can also be crossed off the list. This means that the video was filmed in the state of Texas. The location of Kelli’s sister is not enough evidence to support a more specific location; however, returning once more to the M.A.C. store may provide a clue. According to a study cited in an article in Marketing Week magazine, “58 per cent of shopping takes place within five miles of the home and just 20 per cent of purchases are made more than ten miles away” (Parry and Leary-Tanner eds., 2004, p. 38). Even if Kelli is part of the minority that drives more than 10 miles to go shopping, it is likely that she lives in the same general area as the M.A.C. store she went to. By mapping all the locations of M.A.C. stores in Texas, I found that all of them were in the eastern half of the state. More precisely, of the seven locations there, three are in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area (Dallas, Arlington, and Plano), two are in Houston, one is in Austin, and one is in San Antonio. Based on the shopping habits research noted above, there is an 80% chance that Kelli lives within a 10-mile radius of a M.A.C. store.

Although Jamie’s geographic location for the video is obviously the same as Kelli’s, her speech contains fewer lexical clues since she makes no direct claims to an area as Kelli did with her references to Beaumont and the M.A.C. store. One of the best clues to Jamie’s location comes from Kelli. In lines 32-33 Kelli says “And I saw you like
the day after it happened, before you got it fixed.” The fact that Kelli saw Jamie on a previous day, as well as on the day the video was made, suggests that Jamie and Kelli live or work in the same area and may see each other on a regular basis. This does not imply that they are friends or even well acquainted, an issue I will touch on later. Jamie also states that “I usually go to the same place,” indicating that she has lived in the same area for a while. Since Kelli saw Jamie the last time Jamie “cheated” on her usual hairdresser, Jamie and Kelli must reside in a similar geographic dwelling place (i.e. one of the metropolitan areas listed above). However, living in a particular location does not guarantee an individual will have that place identity. Such an identity can be constructed in opposition to geographic location.

Although the reasons for selecting a place identity may differ from person to person, one of the main ways an individual can demonstrate this is through speaking style. Some elements of style include speech rate, accent, content, and pausing (Bell, 1984, p. 162). To analyze the speakers’ place identities, I will focus on the accent, or pronunciations, they use in their speech. Convergence with the accepted norms of cities would indicate that Jamie and Kelli identify with their geographic location; whereas, divergence from these norms would indicate that they identify with an outside place.

Many Texans have a pronunciation which distinguishes their speech from other areas of the United States. However, phonological research has discovered that there is also much variation within the state. Bailey and Bernstein (1989), Bernstein (1993), Bailey and Tillery (1996), and Bernstein and Bernstein (1998) all include, either explicitly or implicitly, the idea of a conservative and innovative form in Texas. Although none of these papers includes clear definitions for them, it is suggested in
Bailey and Tillery’s (1996) text that conservative refers to a historical norm and innovative refers to a deviation from it (p. 310). Since it has been concluded that the speakers are from a city in east Texas, the pronunciations these authors study become clues to place identity. The transcript in the appendix is not a phonological representation of the speakers’ utterances so I will provide a basic transcription for each utterance used for the following analysis. The same group of authors note many features of Southern American English in Texas that are undergoing change. Although the set of features studied by each differs slightly, the relevant phonological forms include the following:

1) Fronting of /au/ - [au] ↔ [æu]
2) monophthongal /ai/ - [ai] ↔ [a]
3) laxing of /i/, /e/, and /u/ before /l/ - [il, el, ul] ↔ [ɪl, ɛl, ʊl]
4) merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasals, with both realized as /ɪ/ - [ɛN] ↔ [ɪN]
5) near-merger of /ɔ/ and /α/, with both realized as /α/ - [ɔ] ↔ [α]
6) loss of /h/ before /w/ - [hw] ↔ [w]
7) realization of underlying /ɹ/ after vowels - [VØ] ↔ [Vɪ]

For each bracketed pair, the conservative pronunciation appears on the left and the innovative one on the right. My analysis will include examples showing which form Jamie and Kelli use (i.e. conservative or innovative).

One feature noted in both Bailey and Tillery (1996) and Bernstein and Bernstein (1998) is the fronting of /au/ (the vowel in words such as cow or loud). Although these
authors claim this vowel is realized as [æu], I suggest that both parts of the diphthong are fronted, becoming more like [æʊ]. Bailey and Tillery (1996) do not provide specific environments in which /au/ fronting occurs other than their example word *thousand*; however, it appears to be used by both speakers. Jamie’s utterance in line 51 includes an example:

```
[a lɔkt ɪn ðə mɪər ɪn aɪ wɔz ø.ɓæʊt to k.ɹai]
```

I looked in the mirror and I was about to cry

As does Kelli’s speech in line 9:

```
[so ə haf.ɹæ t ɪs t ɹæ t ai mɚ ðæʊ]
```

So I have to set the timer now

What is evident in the transcriptions is that both speakers use the innovative form of the feature, fronting the /a/ portion of the diphthong to [æ] and the /u/ portion to the less rounded [ʊ]. However, Jamie and Kelli also use the conservative form, as in Kelli’s utterance in line 71.

```
[nau a no ðæɹz ø bæntʃ ɪn ɹæn bʌmænt]
```

Now I know there’s a bunch in- in Beaumont
Although /au/ remains, albeit in a somewhat changed form, in innovative speech, the diphthong /ai/ (the vowel in words such as night or ride) becomes simplified to merely [a] before voiced and voiceless obstruents (one of the more salient pronunciations of modern Southern speech). This monophthongization, however, is not used in this context by either of the speakers, despite several occasions where it could have been used. One example uttered by Jamie appears below. The vowel in five is the unchanged diphthong (i.e. the conservative form).

\[sɪks.di ʃaɪv dɔləz\]

sixty-five dollars

Although not used before voiced or voiceless obstruents, both speakers do use the monophthong in the first person pronoun I. The line 9 and line 51 examples given above include this feature. Given the salience of the first person pronoun, this suggests that they are in the process of internalizing (rather than losing) the innovative form.

Another feature of the innovative form is the laxing of /i/, /e/, and /u/ before /l/. Since the phonological change that is happening is the same in all of these, I will discuss them together. Jamie’s utterance in line 81 (shown below) provides an example of the laxing of /i/ before /l/.

\[a ɹɪ ha.vɪ ɹɪ ɹɪ mɛ ɹɪ.ni ɹɪ mai ɹɪm fæm.li ðɛ.ɹ\]

I really haven’t really met any of my family there
Kelli uses it in the context of the same word (really) in lines 79 and 82. These pronunciations also occur within the syllable boundary, as in line 64 uttered by Kelli.

\[ \text{[tɹa.in to bi ɹɪl kɛɹ.fəl]} \]

tryin’ to be real careful

The laxing of /e/ before /l/ does not occur with these speakers. Line 101, which includes the context where this laxing is predicted to occur in the innovative form, shows that Kelli still uses the conservative form.

\[ \text{[dɐ.ɪk hɛ.ɪ pɛl skɪn]} \]

dark hair, pale skin

It should be noted, however, that there are few instances of /e/ being used in contexts that would cause it to be laxed. The transcript does not contain the /ul/ combination so it is impossible to tell whether the speakers use the conservative or innovative form. One explanation for the absence of the innovative form is that the underlying vowels /e/ and /u/ are used so rarely that the phonological rule of laxing has not spread to these vowels.

The next innovative feature is the merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasals, where both are realized as [ɪ]. Kelli’s utterance in line 143 includes an example of its use:

\[ \text{[a.wɪn tə mɛk ɪz.stɹ.dɛi]} \]

I went to mac yesterday
And her utterance in line 130 includes two less standard examples of this feature in the word *entertainment*.

\[\text{ Jamie was in entertainment one time} \]

As shown in the transcription, the merger occurs across the syllable boundary at the beginning of the word. It also occurs at the end of the word despite the fact that the nasal that initiated the innovative form is unpronounced. Jamie produces this feature as well in lines 15-16:

\[\text{ I went somewhere else} \]

The merger of /ɔ/ and /ɑ/ has also been fully internalized by both speakers. Words where [ɔ] would normally appear in the conservative form include *lost* and *walk* (Bernstein, 1993, p. 231). Part of Kelli’s utterance from lines 72-73 appears below.

\[\text{ they’ve got a lot that Cajun and Creole there} \]

Both *got* and *lot* use the innovative form [ɑ]. In fact, the sound [ɔ] was not evident in either speaker’s speech.
The loss of /h/ before /w/, in words such as *which*, occurs as well. Kelli’s utterance in line 152, produced below, shows no vestiges of a breathy sound before [w].

\[\text{am nat } /\text{ʃ}\text{ wɪtʃ kom} \]

I’m not sure which comb

The same with Jamie’s utterance in line 22:

\[\text{sɪks.dɪ faɪv da.ʌz } /\text{kæt wɪtʃ } /\text{ʃɪz ə.мɛi.zɪn} \]

sixty-five dollars for a cut, which – she’s amazing –

The conservative pronunciation of words such as *four* is often realized without /a/, as in [foʊ] (Bailey and Tillery, 1996, p. 311). However, with the innovative form, the underlying /a/ is articulated. Many of the examples cited above include realizations of postvocalic /a/ (including the rhotic form). Both speakers have fully internalized the pronunciation of the postvocalic /a/ as there are no instances of /a/-dropping in any of their utterances.

A summary of these findings appears below:

1. [au] ↔ [æu] - both innovative
2. [ai] ↔ [a] - neither innovative in noted context; both innovative with “I”
3. [il, el, ul] ↔ [ɪl, ɛl, ʊl] - both innovative with /i/ only
4. [ɛN] ↔ [ɪN] - both innovative
5. \([ɔ] \leftrightarrow [\alpha]\) - both innovative
6. \([hw] \leftrightarrow [w]\) - both innovative
7. \([VØ] \leftrightarrow [Vɹ]\) - both innovative

In addition to pronunciations, the authors collected other data (including age, ethnicity, length of residency, and region) to attempt to predict who would produce the innovative and conservative forms. Bernstein (1993) found that people in east Texas are more likely to produce the conservative form, which conflicts with the findings that both speakers are in east Texas and use mostly innovative forms (p. 227). However, she also writes that the innovative form is more common in larger cities (Bernstein, 1993, p. 234). As noted above, Kelli most likely lives within 10 miles of a M.A.C. store and Jamie lives or works near Kelli. All M.A.C. locations in Texas are within metropolitan areas. Since Kelli and Jamie produce many of the innovative forms, this suggests that they identify with the urban community where they live/work.

Pronunciations are not the only clue to place identity. One of the most interesting things about the transcript is actually something that is not there. Although the speakers are in Texas, and have adopted many of the speech patterns of their area, Kelli does not use the term *yall* in her speech. Instead, when she greets her YouTube viewers, she uses the term *guys*. Despite Tillery et al.’s (2000) claim that *yall* carries a mild social stigma, they find that the term is spreading outside the South (p. 282). Maynor (2000) makes the same discovery, adding that the term *you-guys* is spreading into the South (p. 417). Tillery et al.’s (2000) study of the use of *yall* indicates that two survey items that predict
use of the term are “Residence at age sixteen” and “Considers self Southern.”

Given that Bernstein’s (1993) research found that certain innovative forms (such as postvocalic /ɹ/ and fronting of /au/) are more likely to be used by lifelong Texans, Kelli has probably lived in Texas all her life. Her preference for *guys* instead of *yall* demonstrates that she does not consider herself Southern. Tillery et al. (2000) note that the areas most resistant to *yall* include “New England, California/Nevada, and the Great Lakes States and Upper Midwest, areas that are both geographically and culturally far removed from the South” (p. 288). Kelli’s use of *like*, common in Valley Girl speech (discussed in a later section) suggests that she identifies with California. Although neither speaker provides a clue in the video regarding their affiliation with Texas, Kelli’s comment to one of her viewers does. The comment and reply are reproduced below.

```
dogfish281: great videos kellie [sic] love seeing them all. Jamie looks lovely too

KelliInTheRaw @dogfish281: Thank you so much. I will let her know. Just wait! I'll get her all
big, Texas hair glamorous! lol
```

Kelli’s reference to “big, Texas hair” as “glamorous,” as well as her effort to reproduce this stereotypical look, shows that she views Texas positively. Thus while Kelli rejects a Southern identity, she fashions herself as a city-dwelling Texas Valley Girl.

**Status and Power**

According to Persell (1996), status is “a socially defined position in society that carries with it certain prescribed rights, obligations, and expected behaviors.”

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6 Ely (2011) proposes that, while west Texas is part of the Western U.S., East Texas is part of the South.
relevant here is the concept of power, defined as “the capacity of an individual group to control or influence the behavior of others, even in the face of opposition” (Persell, 1996). A more abstract definition of power is given by Stolte (1994), who writes that “[t]he power of actor a over actor b is equal to the amount of resistance on the part of b that can be potentially be overcome by a” (p. 149). Although both status and power can determine behavior, they do so in different ways. Status determines behavior according to what is socially acceptable for a given person, while power relies on resources, personality traits, and connections with others. Jones (2001) writes that power structures regulate practices of identity construction and identity itself (p. 1063). Thus the more power one has, the greater ability there is to change others’ evoked identities. Keating (2009) posits that social stratification among group members leads to “linguistic and stylistic variations” between members that are symbolic of each person’s power, status, and identity within the group (p. 996). This author also notes that, while the dichotomy of powerful/powerless pervades the literature, research has revealed that “power is rarely uncontested” (Keating, 2009, p. 997). In other words, individuals do not passively accept their (less) powerful positions. Instead, they may use verbal strategies to display and enhance their relative power and status.

Past research has often defined conversational behaviors (such as duration of talk or interruptions) as masculine or feminine. Kollock et al. (1985) cite research stating that “[m]en play a dominant role, controlling the interaction and frequently violating rules of polite turn taking;” however, their own research findings contrast with this, showing that power dynamics alone can account for behaviors that were originally ascribed to sex roles (p. 42). In contrast to other studies, Kollock et al. (1985) used mixed- and same-sex
couples in their study, which included individual questionnaires meant to gauge relative power in each couple. Their analysis found that, in female dyads, the more powerful individual talks more and interrupts more, while the less powerful individual backchannels more in order to “support” the other speaker (Kollock et al., 1985). The following analysis compares Jamie’s and Kelli’s behaviors regarding power and status, including utterance length, interruptions, backchanneling, questions, politeness, and formality. I will emphasize that my analysis here is restricted to the relative power and status of the speakers and does not, for the most part, consider the status of outside individuals or groups.

Nordenstam’s (1992) research indicates that conversations between two females show an average of 8.2 words per utterance, whereas two males have an average of 12.3 and mixed couples have an average of 11.3 (p. 77). After accounting for pause fillers (including *um* and false starts), Jamie’s average came out to 9.7 words per utterance, and Kelli’s to 19.9. While Jamie’s average is close to that found in Nordenstam’s research, Kelli’s average far exceeds even the male pair number. There are two reasons for this. First, near the end of the video Kelli has a long, uninterrupted utterance that skews her average. Even if this utterance is removed from the analysis, Kelli’s average utterance length remains high at 17.7 words. Second, Nordenstam (1992) explained that this phenomenon occurs because “there is a general tendency for the people who have been allotted the recording task to talk more than the others. It gives them a greater right to the floor” (p. 79). It is obvious that Kelli is the one “allotted” the task of making the video; therefore, she claims more rights to speak. These rights indicate her higher status in the interaction.
Interruptions, which have been the subject of much recent research, are often found where speech overlaps. Referencing Sacks, Bilmes (1997) notes that one of the basic rules of conversation in our society is that “Not more than one party should speak at a time” (p. 510). Okamoto et al. (2002) state that interruptions are violations of this rule “that have the potential to disrupt the current speaker’s turn” (p. 40). West and Zimmerman, as cited in Okamoto et al. (2002), define interruptions operationally as “incursions that are initiated more than two syllables away from the initial or terminal boundary of a unit-type” (p. 40). For example, if a person begins speaking two syllables after another person has already begun, West and Zimmerman would immediately label this an interruption. However, Bilmes (1997) observes that mid-utterance overlaps may be an instance of interruption, or they may not. He argues that “[i]nterruption is based on normative judgments; and it is the participants’ judgments, not the analyst’s, which are of consequence for the interaction” (Bilmes, 1997, p. 511). In other words, an interruption cannot be assumed by the analyst using simple heuristics such as overlapping speech. “We may speak of a violation only when one or more of the participants gives some sign that a violation has occurred. Even then, we may not say that a violation has occurred, but only that a CLAIM of violation has been made” (emphasis in original) (Bilmes, 1997, p. 511). Bilmes (1997) differentiates between “doing interrupting,” and “doing being interrupted.” His phrasing implies that interruptions don’t just happen, they must be actively negotiated. “By [doing interrupting] I mean not only that a speaker is performing an act that can be construed as interruptive, but that the act incorporates some special work which constitutes a display of interruptiveness” (Bilmes, 1997, p. 514). “Doing being interrupted,” on the other hand, is an indication by one party that an
overlap was improperly made by another. Such indications include direct claims, interruption displays (e.g. annoyance), and ignoring (Bilmes, 1997, p. 515). Interlocutors, then, utilize a variety of methods to negotiate whether an interruption has occurred or not. An attempt at interruption by speaker A, for example, does not mean that speaker B will consider herself interrupted, and even if she does, according to Bilmes, speaker A can refute the claim of interruption by claiming that he has the right to speak, which speaker B can accept or counter.

The video and transcript are replete with examples of overlapping speech, not all of which are interruptions, as well as interruptions that do not include overlapping speech. I will begin with a non-example from lines 19-20. Although Jamie and Kelli begin speaking at the same time, this does not constitute an interruption since neither could, or did, claim speaking rights. Kelli was speaking prior to this segment, but she had completed her utterance without any indication that she had more to say. Likewise, 26-27 is also not an interruption since Kelli’s apparent intention is to react to Jamie’s statement without trying to disrupt her turn. Furthermore, Jamie provides no indications of “doing being interrupted.” Kelli “does interrupting” eight times, but only half of these are followed up by Jamie “doing being interrupted.” These include instances such as in lines 104-107, repeated below:

104      Kelli: Irish. Like, how much Irish?
105      Jamie: Let’s see (eyes looking up, thinking). My…
106      Kelli: Like, how’s your, did you check your attitude today? (Laughs)
107      Jamie: It’s my, my mom’s dad. Yeah, he’s Irish.
According to Bilmes’ (1997) analysis, an attempt to change the course of talk can be interpreted as an interruption. However, as mentioned above, a true interruption requires the other person to acknowledge the attempt, which Jamie does in line 107 by ignoring the question Kelli poses in line 106. Bilmes (1997) states that “[o]rdinarily, we are said to ignore only the things to which we could be expected to attend” (p. 520). Since there is nothing to indicate that Jamie could not hear Kelli’s question, it can be concluded that Jamie is “doing being interrupted” in response to Kelli’s “doing interrupting.” A similar situation occurs in lines 80-88. Kelli again changes the subject slightly from Jamie’s Creole family to Louisiana Creole French. After Jamie says that she is unable to answer Kelli’s question, she returns to the previous topic, saying that she does not really know her Creole family. Her return to this subject indicates that her thought was incomplete. Bilmes (1997) notes that (in)complete thoughts are more important than the terminal boundary in determining whether an interruption has occurred (p. 523). A speaker is more likely to claim an interruption if s/he feels a thought is incomplete. Jamie overlaps Kelli in mid-utterance only once, but the overlap is brief and is not construed by either person as an interruption. Kollock et al. (1985) found that the higher power female in a same-sex dyad interrupted more often than her partner (p. 41). Kelli’s high number of interruptions compared to Jamie’s complete lack of them indicates that Kelli claims more power; however, Jamie’s claims to being interrupted show that she is not passively accepting her role as less powerful. Rather, she “does being interrupted” as a means of pointing out that Kelli is violating the rules of polite turn-taking. By calling attention to them, Jamie makes the interruptions observable in the conversation. The fact that Kelli does not engage in further negotiations regarding
claimed interruptions suggests several possibilities: 1) she is oblivious to Jamie’s claims, 2) she believes a response is unwarranted, or 3) she accepts Jamie’s claims. Given that Kelli plans to upload the video to YouTube, it is most likely that she is trying to avoid a feeling of contention, which would negatively affect her image of spiritualism and betterment. This suggests the second option above.

Another type of speech overlap that can reveal status is backchanneling. According to Tottie (cited in Kjellmer, 2009, p. 83), “backchannels are the sounds (and gestures) made in conversation by the current non-speaker, which grease the wheels of conversation but constitute no claim to take over the turn.” Carter and McCarthy (cited in Kjellmer, 2009, p. 83), add to this definition, saying that backchanneling serves to “acknowledge the incoming talk and react to it.” Yeah, uh-huh, and oh, as well as nods and laughter, are all considered instances of backchanneling. One instance of “wheel-greasing” occurs in lines 35-37 where Kelli says “Oh my gosh. It was, like, red (yeah). Like a color red that I can’t even explain.” The word in parentheses is uttered by Jamie, who marks her agreement with the details Kelli is giving in the story. The roles are reversed in line 80. Jamie says “Yeah. They speak French so (yeah) I really haven’t really met any of my family there.” This time Kelli is the one showing support for the current topic through backchanneling. Her excitement, which is more overt in the following dialog, indicates that she wants Jamie to keep talking about her French-speaking relatives. Backchannels also serve as reactions to another speaker’s utterance. Lines 46-47 include a particularly good example: “It wasn’t brown-red at all (Oh, man). It turned out Easter-pink, hot pink, red, blonde, orange, yellow.” Kelli’s utterance in parentheses is not an attempt to take a turn. Rather, it is a reaction to Jamie’s story about
her disastrous dye job. An interesting thing to note is that from line 157 to the end of the transcript, while Kelli is talking at the camera, Jamie does not use any backchanneling. This suggests that, in order to elicit backchanneling from a particular person, that person must be the one to whom talk is directed.\(^7\) Kollok et al. (1985) find that “[i]n power-imbalanced couples, it appears that it is the less powerful person who exhibits the higher rates” of backchanneling (p. 41). However, my analysis of the transcript shows that Jamie backchannels 12 times and Kelli 13 times. The closeness of these numbers seems to indicate no imbalance whatsoever. Kollok et al. (1985) suggest that this type of pattern shows an unwillingness to accept the role of conversational support (p. 42). In essence, Jamie rejects this role as a challenge to Kelli’s conversational dominance.

Another, more contested, indicator of power and status is the use of questions. Although Kollok et al. (1985) link asking questions to lower power positions, Keating notes that questions themselves hold power over the addressee. She states, “The power of a question to compel an answer has been studied by conversation analysts who term a question the first pair part of an adjacency pair” (Keating, 2009, p. 1000). This means that, when a question is asked of an individual, there is an expectation that an answer will be given. If an answer is not provided, the asker has the right to demand an explanation. Questions, then, can be used by individuals to mark their conversational partner as less powerful.

Every question in the exchange between these two speakers is asked by Kelli, and almost every one is answered.\(^8\) For example, in lines 12 and 13 Kelli asks two questions.

\(^7\) This is discussed in more detail in the section on schemas.

\(^8\) Jamie utters a question in line 55 as part of a quote. Since the question was not directed at Kelli, it does not fit the description of an adjacency pair.
Although the second question is answered right away in line 14, the first one is not answered until line 22. The questions, such as in lines 62, 79, 92, 104, and 153, are answered, more or less, immediately. Kelli’s question in line 106 remains unanswered, as noted above, because Jamie ignores it in order to claim an interruption. One of the last questions Kelli asks is in line 145: “Like how long does it take you to comb your hair?” Jamie’s utterance following this query actually expands on the answer she gave when addressing the question in line 143; she does not answer the question of “how long?” Of the 17 questions posed by Kelli, only three do not have corresponding answers. This supports Keating’s statement above noting that interlocutors feel compelled to answer questions. It is possible that the absence of questions posed by Jamie is significant in that she does not feel she has enough power to control the flow of conversation. Whether or not this is the case, Kelli exercises power over Jamie through questions.

Politeness theory suggests that questions, as well as answers, can act as power and status markers. This theory, devised by Brown and Levinson, relies on the concepts of positive face, negative face, and face-threatening-act (FTA). Positive face refers to a person’s desire for his/her wants to be desirable to some/certain others, negative face to a person’s desire to be unimpeded by others. An FTA occurs when an utterance runs contrary to the speaker’s and/or hearer’s desires (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 62). Morand (2000) includes contradicting, criticizing, disagreeing, interrupting, imposing, requesting information, and embarrassing as possible FTAs (p. 237). Politeness strategies can serve to minimize the effects of an FTA. Positive politeness strategies include use of colloquialisms or slang, claims of a common point of view, and use of inclusive forms such as ‘we’ or ‘let’s;’ negative politeness strategies include hedges,
indirect requests, and apologies, to name just a few of each type (Morand, 2000, p. 238-39). The following examples will help clarify:

1)  a) Threat to hearer’s positive face: “That was a dumb thing to do.”
    b) w/ politeness strategies: “I don’t think that was the smartest thing to do.”

2)  a) Threat to hearer’s negative face: “Take out the trash right now.”
    b) w/ politeness strategies: “Will you take out the trash?”

The sentences in (1) threaten the hearer’s positive face by indicating that a certain behavior was undesirable. The sentences in (2) threaten the hearer’s negative face by trying to impose the speaker’s will on the hearer. However, the utterances in (1b) and (2b) employ the politeness strategies of hedging and indirect requesting (respectively) that indicate to the hearer that the speaker is accounting for the hearer’s positive and negative face wants. In agreement with the original theory, Stephan et al. (2010) state that “three aspects of interpersonal situations are universally related to politeness: (a) the relative power of the addressee over the speaker, (b) the degree of imposition of the to-be-performed act, and (c) the social distance between the speaker and the addressee” (p. 268). In other words, when determining how to minimize an FTA, a speaker may consider relative power, relative status, and the impact of the FTA on the hearer’s face wants. Morand’s (2000) hypothesis, which his data supports, is that “speakers low in power relative to their addressee will employ higher levels of politeness, as measured by intuitive judgments of overall politeness” (p. 240). Conversely, speakers higher in relative power will use lower levels of politeness. As Cook et al. (2006) note, “The fact
that some actors control more highly valued resources than others can lead to inequality in exchange as social debts are incurred and discharged by acts of subordination” (p. 194). In other words, individuals will construct or accept a lower status position relative to another in an attempt to repay that other for the bestowal of valued resources. Once this social hierarchy is set, it will continue to impact interactions. A speaker’s consideration of relative status will help determine whether the listener “deserves” politeness strategies or not. For example, if person A determines that person B is a superior, A will assume that she has fewer rights in the interaction and that B’s rights and expectations take precedence over her own. As with power, higher status individuals will provide lower levels of politeness to a person of lower status, while lower status individuals will higher levels of politeness to those of higher status. Although there is no definite ranking of FTAs, the appropriateness of FTAs and accompanying politeness strategies is often negotiated by the interlocutors, as shown above with interruptions.

Each of Kelli’s questions is a request for information, so each is considered an FTA directed at Jamie’s negative face wants. Some politeness strategies that apply to questioning are 1) request to ask a question, 2) avoid the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you,’ and 3) use the past tense (Morand, 2000, p. 238). Below is an example of each:

1) “Can I ask you a question (about…)?”

2) “[Do you] wanna go [with me]?”

3) “I had been wondering if you might give me some.”
Use of the strategy in (1) would mean that the speaker does not have the right to ask a question without permission. Strategy (2) impersonalizes the utterance to protect the speaker’s face. The past tense in (3) creates distance in time, which allows the speaker to retract the request by saying that it is no longer desired in the present.

None of Kelli’s questions includes politeness strategies like those above. For example, in line 66 Kelli asks “what is your background?” She does not say “Can I ask you about your background?” or “I had been wondering about your background.” Rather, she uses a direct request for information. However, Norrick (2010) notes that “joking minimizes [social] distance and reduces the threat of requests and impositions” (p. 233). In line 66-67 Kelli restates her question about Jamie’s ancestry in a joking tone. Jamie recognizes Kelli’s attempt at humor by laughing before answering the question. None of the other 16 questions use this or any other known form of politeness strategy, indicating that Kelli’s higher status does not require her to use politeness strategies to minimize FTAs against Jamie.9

Since answers can include the positive face threats of contradicting or disagreeing, here, too, speakers can use politeness strategies. These can include 1) hedging to hide disagreement (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 114) and 2) giving reasons or explanations (Morand, 2000, p. 239). Examples of each strategy appear below:

1) A: “The rally was a huge success.”
   B: “Yeah. It kinda was successful.”

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9 It is possible that *like*, which Kelli uses in the questions in lines 12, 28-29, and 62, can function as a hedge, but there is no evidence in the context of Kelli’s questions to support this.
2) A: “What time is it?”
   B: “I don’t know. I don’t have a watch.”

The strategy in (1) allows speaker B to sound in agreement with speaker A, although she may, in reality, disagree. If B’s agreement were ever questioned (e.g. A: “I thought you agreed that it was a success!”), she could refer back to her qualifying adverb “ kinda.” In (2), the use of an explanation shows that B believes A has a right to an answer. Not only does Jamie answer most of Kelli’s questions, she does so almost immediately following each question. Of the questions with corresponding answers, only two do not receive the requested information. The exchange from lines 82-88 is reproduced below.

82 Kelli: Oh, really? Now is it, like, (finger quotes) true French or is it, like, you know, Spanglish, you know, like, Spanish and English? Is it, like, French and English? Or French and something else? Or is it just strictly French?
83 Jamie: It…
84 Kelli: (Looking at camera) Like, I’ve learned a lot from people; I love this.
85 Jamie: It’s sh – I’m not sure, really (laughs). That side of the family I really don’t, uh, know.
86 I guess they really don’t want nothin’ to do with us cause we don’t speak French –

According to Vanderveken (1991), “A speaker who asks a question requests the hearer to make a future speech act which is a (non-defective or true) answer to that question” (p. 11). In other words, a question directs the hearer to give a truthful response to the question. The inclination to complete an adjacency pair is so strong that Jamie attempts to answer Kelli’s question despite not knowing the answer. However, once Jamie
realizes that she can not provide a truthful answer, she proceeds to give reasons why she is “not sure” of the answer. A similar pattern occurs in lines 145-46, shown below.

145  Kelli: Like how long does it take you to comb your hair?
146  Jamie: I, I’m just probly a lot rougher with it.

Although Jamie’s utterance does not answer Kelli’s stated question, it provides an explanation for what Jamie likely assumes to be Kelli’s implied question: “Why is it taking me so long to comb your hair?”\(^\text{10}\) In addition, Jamie hedges her statement with “probly” to avoid claiming that Kelli’s combing ability is deficient. The politeness strategy used by Kelli (namely, joking) is arguably a lower level strategy since it does not imply that she does not have a right to ask the question. On the other hand, Jamie uses higher level strategies when answering Kelli’s questions. Her use of explanations and hedges shows that Jamie assumes lower status in the conversation.

Though Jamie does not exercise much power in this conversation, she does negotiate her status through antilocution.\(^\text{11}\) Keating (2009) writes that “[u]sing derogatory words for subordinate groups based on gender, ethnicity, or race imposes ideas about such groups through rights to name or refer” (p. 999). Jamie refers to Louisiana Creoles, including her own relatives, as “swamp rats” in line 74. This negative stereotype based on a social custom is used to derogate the people it is applied to. By claiming the right to label Louisiana Creoles in this way, Jamie imposes her belief system

\(^{10}\) Kelli avoids this question since it would threaten her own positive face wants.

\(^{11}\) *Antilocution*, a term originally used by Allport (1958), is discussed by Feagin (1991) who suggests that the less knowledge one has about outgroups, the more likely one is to discriminate against them (p. 102).
on Kelli (whose appreciation of the term is apparent in her remark “Love it!”). Her ultimate goal here is to demean the group in order to distance herself from them and appear better; that is, to increase her status relative to them. By disparaging an outside group that cannot defend itself, Jamie constructs a scenario in which she is no longer the person of lowest status.

According to Bell (1984), the use of standard, formal language also indicates social distance. Citing a German study\(^{12}\), he states that “subjects paid more attention, and spoke more formally, when their addressee was thought to be socially superior” (Bell, 1984, p. 150). Although the dichotomy of formality/informality has been used in the literature with different, sometimes conflicting, senses, Irvine (1979) writes that three areas of formality include 1) the rules associated with a particular social setting, 2) the variability and spontaneity of speech, and 3) the characterization of a social setting (p. 774).\(^{13}\) Generally, formal situations have extra or more elaborate rules; less variability and spontaneity; and specific speech styles for respect, etiquette, and politeness that connote seriousness and social distance (Irvine, 1979, p. 774-75). As discussed previously, some implicit formalized rules of conversation include a) one speaker at a time, b) don’t interrupt another speaker’s turn, and c) be considerate of face wants. Kelli consistently breaks these rules throughout the video, indicating that she considers the setting to be informal and not subject to the same rules as formal communication. Jamie, on the other hand, follows these rules much more closely; that is, she tends to stop speaking when Kelli interrupts and does not overtly threaten Kelli’s positive or negative

\(^{12}\) The study, published in German, was done by Vaneček and Dressler (1975).

\(^{13}\) Irvine includes a fourth use of formality which is not relevant to this analysis.
face. Regarding variability, for most of the video Kelli uses a wide vocal range and informal vocabulary, including *like* and *guys*. Romaine and Lange (1991) write that, when *like* is “independent of sentential structure,” it is considered a nonstandard form (p. 245-46). The “independent” *like* that these authors refer to is the one that can be omitted from an utterance without changing the propositional content. Jamie and Kelli both use this form, as shown in the following excerpts from the transcript.

69 Kelli: Creo’. Now, that’s, *like*, in the, um, Louisiana, um…

…

109 Jamie: *Like*, red hair, green eyes… And he’s really, really, really mean.

In these examples, *like* could be deleted without altering the meaning of the sentences. Jamie uses this form only four times, which falls far below Kelli’s use at 31 times. Similarly, *guys* is used to suggest friendliness, camaraderie, and informality (Lawson, 1982, p. 158). The social setting could be characterized as joking, fun, and relaxed, as evidenced by Kelli’s use of mocking tones, laughter, and gestures. Of these markers of informality, Jamie mainly uses laughter. These findings correspond with Bell’s study. That is, Jamie’s preference for formal speech indicates that she believes Kelli is her social superior.

The social distance enacted by these speakers is indicative of a relationship of moderate formality. The fact that it is not a mutual formality has some significance. First, either Jamie and Kelli have had relatively few personal interactions with one another or the social needs of one speaker do not require the close friendship of the other

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14 Although it should be noted that her gestures are inhibited by the hairdresser’s cape she is wearing.
As Giles et al. (1973) note, “speech accommodation between members of a dyad can often be a mutual process increasing each time the participants interact” (p. 179). This suggests that, over time, Jamie and Kelli would acquire the same level of formality in similar interactions. Given that this does not occur in the video, I suggest that the interlocutors have had limited interaction. Regarding the other possibility, Giles et al. (1973) write about the hypothesis that “if a speaker does not require this interlocutor’s social approval and finds the latter somewhat distasteful (maybe because of his personality or attitudes), he may modify his accent in a direction opposed to that of his partner” (p. 179). That Jamie finds Kelli’s conversational style “somewhat distasteful” is evident in her claims of being interrupted and limited use of supportive backchannels. Although Jamie’s reasons for using divergent speech are unclear, it serves to decrease the similarity and familiarity between her and Kelli.

Gender

The biological sex of the speakers is apparent in the video; however, according to Bergvall (1999), most linguists have accepted gender as “a social construct, operating in a complex and contested association with the biological construct of sex” (p. 274). This means that gender can be a selected identity that is constructed in acceptance of or opposition to biological sex. Drass (1986) states, “it is reasonable to expect that individuals will use conversational strategies that correspond in meaning with their gender identities, regardless of their sex” (italics in original) (p. 296). If Drass is correct, an analysis of the transcript should show the achieved gender identity of each speaker.

The research on gendered language, although showing mixed results, has produced

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15 This hypothesis is cited from two earlier articles by Giles (1971, 1973).
several statistics-supported generalizations for masculine and feminine speech. But first, a caution. Coates (1993) advises that “gender may be better described in terms of a continuum or continua” (p. 4). In other words, the simple masculine/feminine dichotomy is not an accurate depiction of reality. An individual can perform roles and speech from both genders simultaneously. The following paragraphs will provide evidence for each speaker’s innate and projected gender identities.

One of the lexical items used by the speakers is *like*. According to Romaine and Lange (1991) the grammatical and syntactic uses of *like* are preposition, conjunction, suffix, discourse marker, and quotative (p. 244). Only the final two are relevant to marking gender. Discourse markers, defined as “particles which are used to focus on or organize discourse structure,” are “sequentially dependant elements which bracket units of talk and which are independent of sentential structure” (Romaine and Lange, 1991, p. 245-46). One example of *like* as a discourse marker occurs in line 43 of the transcript when Kelli says “So, like, it d- drank up all the color, then.” In this utterance, *like* serves no grammatical function and is not required for the sentence to be understood. Rather, the speaker uses it to “bracket” the following unit of speech. Romaine and Lange (1991) argue that “women use *like* more because the topics they discuss are typically talked about in an involved conversational style” (p. 228). However, the authors do not provide any statistical support for this view, at least not for the discourse marker. Underhill (1988) writes extensively on the use of *like* as a discourse marker (although he does not use this label). He covers several subcategories, including the use of *like* as a hedge to reduce the force of a statement or request (Underhill, 1988, p. 241). He cites Lakoff’s finding that *like* “combined with the rising intonation…signals a hedge, particularly in
women’s speech” (p. 241). This can be found in this transcript as well. Lines 142-146 appear below.

142 Kelli: I went to mac yesterday… Oh, my gosh. I swear, I’m never going to get your hair combed out
143 (Jamie laughs). Does it ever comb?
144 Jamie: Uh-huh (Laughs).
145 Kelli: Like how long does it take you to comb your hair?
146 Jamie: I, I’m just probly a lot rougher with it.

Line 142 shows that Kelli is beginning to get frustrated with combing out Jamie’s hair. Jamie answers the first question and laughs it off. Kelli, still a little frustrated, asks a direct question to find out if it takes as long for Jamie to comb her own hair. Kelli’s question in line 145 is most likely the beginnings of an attempt to save face, which Jamie supports in line 146 with her comment about her own method of combing. The question in line 145 begins with like, which, in the video, can be heard with a slight rising intonation. Given the question’s relatively more severe tone, Kelli begins with like coupled with a hedging tone. This is evidence of a feminine identity.

The second use of like relevant to this analysis is as a quotative. There are two well-known forms of quotation: direct and indirect. With a direct quote, the person quoting takes the role of the original speaker. With an indirect quote, “speakers normally use themselves as the spatiotemporal point of reference” (Romaine and Lange, 1991, p. 229). Speakers using this method will change deictic elements of the utterance depending on the situation (e.g. “I was there yesterday” might become “Sarah said she was here last week”). Several researchers have suggested a third type, called a quotative. A quotative, according to Romaine and Lange (1991), “allows the speaker to retain the
vividness of direct speech and thought while preserving the pragmatic force of indirect speech” (p. 228). These authors also state that “in some cases, utterances are reported as quotations of a dialogue that either has not occurred or is never intended to occur” (Romaine and Lange, 1991, p. 230). In line 56 Kelli says “And she’s like that’s what happens when you cheat on me.” Her use of the word *me* might suggest a direct quote, with Kelli taking the part of the hairdresser; however, the utterance in lines 32-33 makes it clear that she was not present when Jamie met with her “hair lady.” Kelli says “And I saw you like the day after it happened, before you got it fixed.” If she had been present at the hair appointment, it would have been relevant (according to the Cooperative Principle) for her to say that instead. Line 56 also does not fit the description of an indirect quote as there is no change in the spatiotemporal markers. Since it does not fit either of the two main forms of quotation, it supports the existence of the quotative form. In the study by Romaine and Lange (1991), the authors find that “in many, if not most cases, discourse introduced by *be* + *like* can also represent internal thought” (p. 227). In other words, the construction *be* + *like* can signal to the listener that what follows may be a report of thought rather than speech. This construction appears in Kelli’s utterance as a contraction ‘*s* + *like*. Since both speakers know that Kelli was not at Jamie’s hair appointment, they both understand the use of the construction *be like* as an indicator of what the hairdresser may have been thinking at the time. Jamie also uses this construction in line 51 to report her own thought, although she inserts an adverb between the two words: “I was just like, Oh my gosh!” Blyth et al.’s (1990) survey on *be* + *like* finds that, while women are judged to use it more than men, as far as actual production is concerned, men have a higher probability of using this construction than women (p. 221).
This would suggest that Kelli’s and Jamie’s use of *be + like* is indicative of a more masculine identity. However, *like* is also associated with “Valley Girl” speech, a regional variety with strong ties to Southern California. Blyth et al. (1990) mention a personal communication with Ronald Butters, a linguist and cultural anthropologist, who states that, when a form such as *be like* is new and its usage limited, individuals are more likely to associate the form with a certain acquaintance, media personality, etc. Bucholtz et al. (2007) note that “California is known for its distinctive youth styles and their attendant language use, which have circulated throughout the nation thanks to Hollywood and other forms of media” (p. 328). Kelli and Jamie may be familiar with the Valley Girl persona through friends or television and identify with it to the extent that they mimic the use of *like*. If this is the case, *like* would act as a marker of a feminine identity. Kelli’s extensive use of *like*, as well as *guys* at the beginning of the video, may be an attempt to distance herself from the more stereotypical features of Texas speech that have been used in American movies and other media to portray the “slow-speaking, slow-witted Southerner” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 339).

Topics of conversation also contain gender identity information. Nordenstam (1992) states that “women talk to each other about womanly things – children and personal relations” (p. 80). Willett adds to this the discussion of problems (2000, Introduction). The following is a list of the main topics Kelli and Jamie cover during the video: hair, Jamie’s relationship with her hairdresser, Jamie’s and Kelli’s ancestry, Jamie’s relationship with her French-speaking relatives, and Jamie’s mom. Of these five main topics, four are related to family and personal relationships. The subject of hair, the main theme running throughout the conversation, is used to discuss problems, such as
Jamie’s hair color story and the difficulties of managing appearance. These subjects indicate a feminine identity for both speakers.

Backchanneling, discussed in the previous section, also serves as an indicator of gender identity. Kjellmer’s (2009) research indicates that “women are relatively more likely to add a backchannel after a completed turn…than they are in the middle of a speaker’s turn” (p. 89). My analysis of all the backchannels in the transcript supports this finding, although, as with interruptions, I would amend this from “after a completed turn” to near a possible “terminal boundary” as Okamoto et al. (2002) cite from West and Zimmerman’s article on overlapping. This was the standard I set in the analysis of the transcript. Possible terminal boundaries included after lowered intonation and at the end of a sentence. Lowered intonation generally signals to the listener that a sentence or thought has been completed. An example of this is in lines 88-90, reproduced below:

88 Jamie: I guess they really don’t want nothin’ to do with us cause we don’t speak French –
89 Kelli: Oooh. [unintelligible]
90 Jamie: and we kinda, you know, are mixed

Jamie’s intonation at the end of line 88 is lower, which Kelli likely interprets as a sentence boundary. Although Jamie continues her utterance in line 90 with and, her intonation of the word French indicates that line 90 was added as an afterthought. Kelli’s backchannel here was analyzed as occurring at a possible terminal boundary, as was her utterance in line 111 (“Awww”) since Jamie lowered her intonation at the end of line 110. Based on my criteria (and after accounting for utterances that were interruptions), there are 25 backchannels in the transcript. Nine occur in the middle of an utterance and
16 at a possible terminal boundary. The speakers are roughly equal in their use of each type. Their tendency to backchannel at a possible terminal boundary points to a feminine identity. Kjellmer’s (2009) research also finds that women prefer “unemphatic” backchannels (p. 89). This bears out in the transcript. Of the 25 backchannels, only six are emphatic (e.g. “Oh man”). However, given that all six of these emphatic backchannels are uttered by Kelli, it seems that she, at least, has a tendency towards masculine conversational strategies.

A speaker’s interaction style can indicate gender as well. Nordenstam (1992) states that “Women’s talk during the other speaker’s turn is a normal part of relaxed informal conversation between equals. Women also address the talker, frequently interpolate remarks, and offer enthusiastic comments during the other speaker’s turn” (p. 91). Although my previous analysis determined that Jamie and Kelli are not “equals,” Nordenstam’s findings still apply. The significance here is that Kelli, the higher-ranked speaker in the dyad and the one who uses informal speech, is generally the one who initiates the noted aspects of conversation between equals. Interpolation appears in lines 69-92. Line 69 marks the temporary change of topic from Jamie’s general ancestral background to Creoles and Louisiana. The original topic is picked up once more in line 92 where Kelli resumes it by asking “So, so what’s, like, the rest of it?” Enthusiastic comments occur throughout the discourse, mainly from Kelli reacting to Jamie’s utterances. Lines 52, 77, and 94 contain a few examples. These also point to the speakers’ gender identity as feminine.

For Kelli, there is one additional item that demonstrates gender identity. In line 136 Jamie mentions that her mom was “in the Madonna stages.” Kelli not only raises her
hand at this (to indicate “me, too”), she also says “That’s me” multiple times. In aligning herself with the fashion styles of a female entertainer, Kelli also aligns herself with a feminine identity.

Age

Although an exact age for each speaker is impossible based on limited data provided by the video and transcript, an approximate range can be found. Each speaker’s age will be discussed separately, including instances where age is constructed in opposition to chronology. The first clue to Jamie’s age identity appears in line 14-15 where she says “Uh, I usually go to the same place, but, the lady, she only works Monday through Friday and, course, I work.” Her reference to Monday through Friday indicates that her hairdresser works normal business hours, that is, Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Jamie was unable to go to her preferred hairdresser because she works during the same hours, which means she works at a full-time job. In Texas, the minimum age for a full-time job is 14-15 years old. In order to find a maximum for Jamie’s age range, I will return to the use of like. In addition to marking gender, the word like and the construction be like can mark age identity. The relevant function of like here is as a quotative. Jamie uses like once as a quotative. Blyth et al. (1990) compiled a small corpus on the use of be like in which the oldest speaker to use the construction was 38 years old. This puts the range at 14-38 years old. In line 47 Jamie makes a reference to Rainbow Brite, a character that first showed up on Hallmark cards in 1983 and then on television from 1984 to 1987 (Rainbow Brite, 2012). Although I was unable to find a specific target audience for the show, Netflix.com lists the Rainbow Brite movie (released in 1985) in both the 5-7 and 8-10 age categories. Assuming Jamie was between
5 and 10 when she watched the Rainbow Brite show, she would have been born between 1974 and 1982, putting her age identity at 28-36.

Kelli’s utterances also include a few age identity markers. Towards the end of the video, in lines 160-61, Kelli mentions that “I only go to the dentist like once every, like, five years, um, because I don’t like to.” This indicates that she is “an adult” and old enough to decide when to go to the dentist or not. In the U.S., this is typically around 18 years old. Also, Kelli uses like twice as a quotative. Her usage of the be like construction puts her well within Blyth et al.’s (1990) age limit of 38. Her high usage of this form puts her age identity in line with the college-age speakers of Blyth et al.’s (1990) study, which puts the age range at 20-24. However, in lines 135-140, Kelli seems to be putting herself in an older age bracket by aligning herself with “Madonna stages.” The immediacy with which Kelli claims membership in Madonna stages indicates that she has knowledge of who Madonna is and what it means to be in Madonna stages. Although she says “That’s me” as if in the present tense, in line 140 she says “I never got over that stage,” referring to makeup, indicating that her other stages began and ended some time ago. Madonna’s first album came out in 1983. The poofy hair, spandex, cowboy boots, and cutoff jean shorts phases, which Kelli claims to have been a part of, ended sometime around 1989. Assuming Kelli was at least a teenager (thirteen years old or older) when she began her Madonna stages, this would put her age between 34 and 40. The upper age limit would be extended if Kelli were older when the stages began. This suggests that Kelli is constructing an age identity that is younger than her chronological years. This follows the same pattern noted by Howard (2000). “The ubiquitous pattern is that the older people are, the less closely their subjective age identity matches their
chronological age” (Howard, 2000, p. 380). She goes on to say that more than half of people in their forties feel younger than their chronological age. Weaver (2001) recognized that “[i]dentities are always fragmented, multiply constructed, and intersected in a constantly changing, sometimes conflicting array” (p. 240). Kelli appears to be in this group as well. Her speech shows that she identifies with younger people, while her claim of being stuck in Madonna stages indicates a conflicting chronological age closer to forty.

Ethnicity

As noted above in the section on place identity, both speakers use the innovative variants in their pronunciation. Bernstein and Bernstein (1998) support a conclusion of a white identity, saying that whites are more likely to adopt innovative phonological forms (p. 48). But “whiteness,” based on dictionary definitions, is a race. Although the speakers’ innate ethnic identities are overtly stated, each constructs them differently.

Jamie claims Creole, German, Jewish, and Irish as her ancestral identities, but she does not claim them all as selected identities with equal force. The first ethnicity she mentions is Creole. What follows is a mixture of claiming and denying this innate ethnic identity. My seminar paper concluded that the primacy of this ethnicity (its being the first one Jamie mentions) suggests that it is significant to her and proposed that the long-term presence of Creoles in North America allows Jamie to assert an “I was here first” attitude (Morgan, 2010, p. 11). However, according to Dubois and Melançon (2000), “[i]t is the Black population in the state [Louisiana] that constitutes the largest repository of the Creole language. If one considers language to be an important cultural identification marker, [Black Creoles] should also be seen as the repository of Creole
identity in the state” (p. 247). Given this, Jamie’s Creole family are likely to be perceived as Black by anyone who knows they speak French in Louisiana. Howard (2000), citing Nagel, states that ethnic identity can be characterized as “a dialectic between internal identification and external ascription” (p. 375). Furthermore, according to Howard (2000), people “tend to evaluate positively those groups to which they belong and to discriminate against groups they perceive to pose a threat to their social identity” (p. 369). Given the marginalized status of African Americans in the South, Jamie may be rejecting a Creole identity to avoid unwanted racial attributions that would weaken her White identity.

In line 74 Jamie mentions a negative stereotype of Creoles, saying “Call ‘em Louisiana swamp rats” (her pronunciation of this sentence suggests the presence of a null subject such as “they” or “we” rather than suggesting a directive to use this term). The connotations and metaphors associated with the final two words are what make them a negative stereotype. The connotations of swamp might include “stagnant, fetid water” and “sticky mud and brambles.” The metaphorical use of the word in the term swamped implies an inability (or extreme difficulty) to escape from a situation. For example, “I’m swamped at work” suggests that the individual cannot leave until all responsibilities have been met and “My boat is swamped” suggests that the boat is stuck and cannot be removed without great difficulty. The word rat has a long history of negative associations. In addition to being blamed for spreading diseases, rats are present in several common idioms including “smell a rat,” “rat on,” and “rat race,” all of which have negative implications. These negative associations suggest that Jamie is prejudiced against Creoles.
In their study of Creoles in Louisiana, Dubois and Melançon (2000) found that “Creole identity is largely chosen by those who speak fluent Creole French” (p. 255). The concept CofP requires full participation in order to claim full membership in a group. Since Jamie states in line 88 that she does not speak French, she can never be more than a marginal member. In a sense, the group, as she perceives it, is denying her membership, which may be causing her to reject the identity in order to protect her self-esteem.

Howard (2000) notes that “societies in particularly intractable conflicts form societal beliefs that help them cope with, but also perpetuate, these conflicts” (p. 383). Jamie does this on a more personal level with her Creole family by perpetuating the negative label of “swamp rats.”

In line 103 Jamie mentions her innate Irish ethnicity. Her opinion of an Irish identity, however, seems somewhat ambivalent. Jamie only mentioned her Irish grandfather after Kelli claimed an Irish heritage. Since Jamie does not automatically remember which of her relatives is Irish, it is likely that her conception of Irish people is based solely on her knowledge of her grandfather, which seems to be secondhand. For example, in line 112 she says “everybody said he had evil in his blood” and in line 114 she continues this sentence with “cause he was just always so mean, but I.” The significance in line 112 is that “everybody said.” If Jamie had known personally of her grandfather’s temper, these two words would not be necessary. Although she does not get a chance to finish her thought in 114, it seems that she is about to qualify her statement about her knowledge of her grandfather’s disposition. Jamie’s ambivalence is further evident in that she does not engage in Kelli’s reconstruction of Irish temperament.
After mentioning her German and Jewish ancestry, Jamie makes no comments and they are not pursued as topics in the conversation. The significance of this lies in the fact that both of these ethnicities are unmarked; that is, they fit in with the dominant category of whiteness. Although German and Jewish people do have some defining characteristics, they also possess physical traits that allow them to blend in with the larger population (such as skin and hair color). The two ethnicities that are discussed at length, Creole and Irish, have traits that are more salient and those who possess them are set apart from the general population. For example, a Creole is more likely to be Black and speak French (according to Dubois and Melançon) and an Irish person is (stereotypically) more likely to have red hair and green eyes (as noted by the speakers). These are the identities which must be negotiated.

Kelli claims German, Irish, Indian, and Black Dutch\(^{16}\) as her innate ethnic identities. The transcript has several clues as to which of these she internalizes. In line 94 Kelli says excitedly “Hey I got some German, too”; however, her excitement seems to be because she has something in common with Jamie rather than because she has German ancestry. Her reiteration of having German ancestors in line 102 indicates that it is still somewhat important to her, but it is not discussed at length. In line 96 Kelli says “Jewish? No Jewish.” Her tone in the video indicates she is disappointed at not having more ancestry in common with Jamie. Despite not having Jewish blood, she attempts to construct a Jewish identity by way of stereotyped features when she says “I think I have a Jewish nose, though.”

\(^{16}\) The term “Black Dutch” has so many different referents that it is impossible to know which one Kelli intends based on her limited mention of this ethnicity.
Kelli is particularly tied to her Irish ancestry. Although her knowledge of the negative Irish stereotype regarding temperament is apparent in lines 117-118, she uses a slightly more positive phrasing, calling it “attitude” instead. As Howard (2000) states, “When identity struggles arise, they generally take the form of redefining negative images as positive” (p. 386). Kelli’s euphemism “attitude” does exactly this. Jamie unintentionally threatens Kelli’s characterization of Irish temperament in line 109, although Kelli does not notice this for six lines. Jamie says that her grandfather was mean, not that he had attitude. It is not until line 115 that Kelli realizes that Jamie’s mean grandfather was Irish. Her utterance (“Oh, he was the Irish one?”) suggests that she has heard about Jamie’s mean grandfather before but had not known he was Irish. When she puts together the negative image of Jamie’s grandfather with his Irish ethnicity, she begins to work at defending her conception of Irish temperament. She somewhat jokingly says “I try to lighten it up a little. It’s not mean, it’s just attitude.” She then avoids additional cognitive dissonance by changing the topic back to Jamie’s hair.

The next ethnic identity Kelli constructs is Indian. Weaver (2001) notes that a “Native” may identify differently depending on the context (p. 243). Optional labels might include “Native American,” “American Indian,” or even the name of a specific tribe or region. Of all the options available to her, Kelli chooses the term “Indian.” According to Weaver (2001), “The label ‘Indian’ has served to reinforce the image of indigenous people as linked to a romantic past” (p. 243). Kelli selects the term “Indian” in order to cue this schema as well as to lay claim to an identity that establishes her as the one whose North American heritage goes back the farthest (that is, farther than Jamie’s
Louisiana Creole heritage). This is only one of several verbal competitions Kelli engages in (another will be discussed at the end of this section). Weaver (2001) notes that social, economic, and political factors can lead a person to claim (or not) a Native identity (p. 244). However, Kelli seems to have more philanthropic goals. Under the profile section of her YouTube channel, Kelli lists the purposes of her videos to be “health, cooking, nutrition, clothes, makeup, hair, supplements, relationships, and anything else I can think of to support you in becoming [sic] your ultimate best.” In a sense, Kelli seeks to be a guide for others in their pursuit of betterment. Weaver (2001) writes that “[n]onnative people may view indigenous people as having a harmonious relationship with nature and possessing an unspoiled spirituality” (p. 247). Claiming an Indian identity, then, allows Kelli to claim innate expertise as a “spiritual guide” in her quest to help others. A more recently uploaded video which supports this conclusion is titled “Angel Training/How To Be An Angel.” It displays an act of charity towards homeless people and calls out for others to “do what you know you’re on this planet to do” (KelliInTheRaw, 2012).

The ability to claim multiple ethnicities is particularly significant for people living in the U.S., which is known for its acceptance (more or less) of ethnic outsiders. There is an ideal that no matter what ethnicity you are you can be American. This is one of the connotations of the hyphenated ethnicity (e.g. African-American, Asian-American, etc). Schildkraut (2007) writes, “Day-to-day politics often pits assimilation and diversity against one another, yet many Americans believe that in the ideal, a balance between the two can be reached” (p. 600). She further notes that “only in the past few decades have both elites and citizens come to endorse this notion that America’s unique identity is grounded in its immigrant legacy” (p. 600). These statements were born out in the
accompanying survey, which took a random sample of 2,800 Americans (with an oversample of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians) and asked them if the items on the survey “should be very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant in making someone a true American” (Schildkraut, 2007, p. 601; emphasis in original). The goal of this research was to find out each respondent’s internalized American ideal (as opposed to what they believed the American ideal is). The survey results show that less than 10% of respondents think “being white” should be very or somewhat important. When very important and somewhat important are combined, the following were found to be true American ideals: respecting cultural differences (96.9%), seeing people from all backgrounds as American (92.7%), maintaining ancestral cultural traditions (72.7%), and blending into the larger society (73.4%) (Schildkraut, 2007, p. 602). Although the latter two seem at odds with each other, the ideal of incorporationism “celebrates our ability both to assimilate and maintain difference” (Schildkraut, 2007, p. 600). In other words, claiming an identity other than the majority is (ideally) acceptable.

Although the U.S. is known for its ethnically diverse population, not all of its citizens have the same view of multiple cultures existing side by side. According to Berbrier (2004), there are two main ideologies of multiculturalism: assimilationism and pluralism. Within assimilationism are two related ideologies: strong assimilationism and weak (also known as “melting pot”) assimilationism. Berbrier (2004) states that “images of assimilation and pluralism situate ethnic, racial, or minority groups along a dimension of deviance and normality” (p. 32; emphasis in original). Strong assimilationism states that people of all ethnicities should conform to the norms of the culture in which they live as quickly as possible. From this viewpoint, “we are said to be defending an inherently
‘European’ or ‘Western’ nation from predominantly non-European immigrants” (Berbrier, 2004, p. 33). In other words, any ethnic identity other than “American” is considered deviant (Berbrier, 2004, p. 33). Melting-pot assimilationism “embraces a range of views from a moderate Americanization to an ideal of physical amalgamation and cultural blending” (Berbrier, 2004, p. 33). Although this view prefers ethnic people to retain some of their ethnic identity initially, it also holds that they should not do so indefinitely. The idea is to assimilate (more or less entirely), but at a slower rate. In Berbrier’s (2004) terms, melting pot assimilationists believes that “ethnicity is deviant only in certain cases” (p. 34). Pluralism, which opposes assimilation, considers ethnic stratification to be culturally (and perhaps genetically) rooted and all attempts at assimilation to be futile (Berbrier, 2004, p. 34). In other words, ethnicity is normal. Berbrier (2004) then notes that, after political movements such as Black Pride, ethnicity “became a symbol of pride, something you were supposed to have” (Berbrier, 2004, p. 37).

Both speakers construct multiple ethnic identities, but the ethnicities they claim, and the ways in which they do so, hints at their multicultural ideology. Jamie first rejects a Creole identity. Although Louisiana Creoles are related to the French (who are European), Berbrier (2004) notes that, while white immigrants who attempted assimilation were generally accepted, African Americans were seen as more aberrant when they tried to assimilate than when they did not (p. 36). In rejecting an identity linked to blackness, and constructing identities related to whiteness, Jamie maintains a strong assimilationist stance. That is, she focuses her identity on her white European ancestry. Kelli also puts out clues to her ideology. She accepts not only European

17 The subject of ethnicities and the conclusions mentioned here are discussed in detail in a later section.
ancestry but also Native American and Black Dutch. Her construction of ethnicities of “color” and preference for holding on to a few cultural traits (e.g. Indian spiritualism and Irish “attitude”) indicates that she is a moderate melting pot assimilationist bordering on pluralism. In simpler terms, Kelli believes that having a variety of cultures is important to an American identity. However, since she has set aside many other cultural aspects of her constructed ethnicities and assimilated into white American culture (see above), she likely does not hold to the “broadly inclusive pluralism” viewpoint (Berbrier, 2004, p. 39).

The manner in which the speakers label their mixed heritage, however, is quite different. Jamie calls herself a “mutt” and Kelli calls herself “Heinz 57.” Jamie’s self-label, while seeming to be said with pride, has somewhat negative connotations. The word mutt is generally associated with dogs of indeterminate breed. Through this meaning, mutt is semantically related to mongrel, mangy, and cur. Jamie’s use of this term may suggest that she views her mixed heritage with disdain. Alternatively, she may use the term merely as a marker of relative status, signaling that she accepts a position below Kelli on the social order. Kelli, on the other hand, labels her mixed ancestry with the term “Heinz 57,” a term associated with the company whose slogan is “57 varieties.” The relationship here is that every one of Kelli’s ethnicities adds “flavor” to her identity.

A pattern that emerges from the transcript demonstrates a type of competition. It is significant that Kelli is the one who initiates it. Starting in line 66, Kelli asks Jamie what her background is. Jamie begins her list with Creole. Although Kelli does not claim this ancestry, she does create a connection to Creoles through her sister’s residence in Beaumont where “they’ve got a lot that Cajun and Creole.” Jamie’s list continues in
Kelli excitedly points out that she, too, has German ancestry. Jamie then lists Jewish. At first Kelli sounds disappointed that she cannot match this, but then she claims to have a Jewish nose. Kelli then takes her turn at listing her ancestry as Black Dutch, Irish, German, and Indian. In the next line Jamie also claims Irish heritage, causing Kelli once more to seem disappointed. She asks Jamie “how much Irish” she has, presumably to suggest that Jamie is less Irish than Kelli. It seems that, for Kelli at least, the goal is to play down the significance of her speaking partner’s ancestry while, at the same time, listing as many “new” ones as possible. This type of behavior has been pointed out in the literature as well. According to Weaver (2001), “Someone must be excluded from a particular identity in order for it to be meaningful” (p. 244). This is precisely the mentality that Kelli seems to have. For her, ethnic identity is most meaningful when it is not shared with her speaking partner.

**schemas**

A schema is an aspect of identity that affects behavior. Although not directly discussed in the previous pages, this concept is a driving force behind much of the behavior in the video. According to Casson (1983), “Schemas are conceptual abstractions that mediate between stimuli received by the sense organs and behavioral responses” (p. 430). Put another way, experiences in the world cause individuals to produce generalizations about the world that lead to particular behaviors. A second function of schemas is to interpret experiences in order to evaluate them against what is already “known” about the world. As Casson (1983) states, “A schema is also a prototype...It is a stereotypic, or generic, representation of a concept that serves as a

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18 The plural form appears in the literature both as schemas and schemata. Since schemas appears to be the more-used term, I have adopted it here as well.
standard for evaluating the goodness-of-fit between schema variables and elements in the 
environment” (p. 434). Howard (2000) elaborates on this, saying that “[g]roup schemas 
(analogous to stereotypes) include organized information about social positions and 
stratification statuses, such as gender, race, age, or class. Because the social positions we 
occupy have immediate consequences for our sense of self, group schemas play a major 
part in processes of identification” (p. 368). In other words, schemas are representations 
of reality that exist in a person’s mind and/or in the wider culture which can be used to 
compare new experiences with remembered ones so as to determine appropriate 
behaviors and responses to the novel situation. These behaviors and responses, in turn, 
impact how an individual perceives him/herself and how s/he is perceived by others. 
That is, behaviors that correspond with accepted schemas will be interpreted differently 
than those that are contrary. DiMaggio (1997) simplifies the process of schema selection, 
stating that “selection is guided by cultural cues available in the environment” that are 
often “primed or activated by an external stimulus or frame” or “activated through 
conversation, media use, or observation of the physical environment” (p. 274). Once 
cued, schemas become like scripts that people follow in order to make sense of the 
situation (Casson, 1983, p. 448). The most likely cue for the speakers’ schemas is their 
conversation. Schemas that are evident in the video include 1) “getting one’s hair done,” 
2) working hours, 3) cheating, 4) narrative structures, and 5) performance.

The schema of getting one’s hair done is elicited by Kelli at the beginning of the 
video (line 11 of the transcript) when she says “like you’re in the salon.” The situational 
frame “salon,” along with the presence of salon artifacts (e.g. a “professional cape” and 
scissors), triggers a schema. Willett writes that historically, and particularly for White
middle-class women, the salon or beauty shop was “a uniquely female sphere that allowed women to talk openly about the personal matters of home and family” (2000, Introduction). She goes on to say that “beauty shops remain places where women cherish female companionship, exchange information, share secrets, and either temporarily escape or collectively confront their problems and heartaches” (Willett, 2000, Introduction). Jamie and Kelli’s choice of topics indicate that they hold this schema. As discussed previously, they talk about family relationships, ancestry, and problems with hair and hairdressers. Given the constraint of differing status, they do not cover more personal topics such as secrets and heartaches. Given that the salon schema is triggered at the beginning of the conversation, it is possible that it sets the stage for the schemas which follow. Casson (1983) notes that “[s]chemata…are organic wholes comprised of parts that are oriented both to the whole and to other parts” (p. 431). The salon may be part of a larger schema that includes being female (as noted by Willett) and sharing stories.

The next schema I will discuss relates to Jamie’s utterance in lines 14-15: “Uh, I usually go to the same place, but, the lady, she only works Monday through Friday and, course, I work.” Although not discussed in the literature, the schema of “work” involves an EMPLOYEE who WORKS for an EMPLOYER in EXCHANGE for MONEY (words in capitals represent abstract concepts). The concept WORK can be broken down further to create the more elaborate schema of an EMPLOYEE who ARRIVES at an OFFICE at 9am MONDAY-FRIDAY and PERFORMS LABOR for an EMPLOYER until 5pm in EXCHANGE for MONEY.19 Although working days and hours vary depending on the job, 9-5 Monday through Friday is most typical. Jamie goes to a different hairdresser

19 This schema is modeled on Casson (1983).
because her usual one only works Monday through Friday. She follows this up with the excuse “I work.” The implied elision in this phrase is “Monday through Friday” or “during the same time.” This implication is acceptable because Jamie elicited the WORK schema through her reference to these days of the week. As concluded in Morgan (2010), “If this schema had not been in place for both speakers, a miscommunication would have resulted” (p. 15). However, this portion of the transcript does not contain evidence of a miscommunication. Such an occurrence might include Kelli asking “Why didn’t you go to your usual hair lady after you got off work?” The absence of statements of this kind is evidence that both speakers have internalized the WORK schema outlined above.

Cheating is a member of the schema of what Bloomquist (2010) terms “dishonest (or dishonorable) acts” (p. 1604). These acts (lying, cheating, and stealing) are determined not by clear judgments of yes or no but of more or less (Bloomquist, 2010, p. 1597). In other words, there is a prototype for cheating and there are degrees of cheating. Bloomquist’s study found that belief of wrongdoing is most important for a judgment of cheating, followed by intent to harm and deliberate action (p. 1601). Although belief is enough to warrant a verdict of cheating, the presence of all three almost guarantees it. In line 15 Jamie claims that she cheated on her usual hairdresser when she got her hair done somewhere else. According to Bloomquist (2010), “With cheating, we find that the concept applies only under the limited conditions of rule governed activities” (p. 1602). That Jamie claims cheating indicates that she believes there are rules governing how to behave in a hairdresser-customer relationship. The implicit rules in this situation are
likely akin to fidelity in personal relationships\textsuperscript{20}: as long as both participants view the relationship as mutually rewarding, there is an implicit agreement not to “see other people,” and, if one individual’s needs are not being met s/he should formally break off the relationship. However, Jamie makes no mention of “quitting” her usual hairdresser. Kelli seems to follow the same rules since she immediately echoes Jamie by saying “You cheater you.” She does not question the statement or suggest a less severe alternative.

The second requirement for the prototypical act of cheating, intent to harm, does not appear to be the case. Jamie clearly states that she did not see her usual hairdresser because her work schedule did not permit it. The third aspect of the prototype is deliberate action, where Jamie is “guilty” once more. She does not end up at a different hairdresser by chance, but by choice. Given that only two of the three features are present, Jamie’s transgression does not conform to the prototype of cheating. Her use of the hedge “kinda” indicates that she understands this as well. Although she broke the rules by choice, she did not do so maliciously.

Narratives are common to all cultures; however, the way in which a story is told varies considerably. In order for a listener to comprehend a story, the story must fit his/her schema for stories (Rice, 1980, p. 156). The basic structure of a problem/resolution story appears on the following page (wavy lines and parentheses denote optional components).\textsuperscript{21} The story Jamie tells in lines 14-61 begins with a two-sentence lead-in outlining the protagonist (herself) and her motivation for going to a different hairdresser. After Kelli shows interest in hearing the story, Jamie begins the

\textsuperscript{20} By this phrasing I refer only to non-sanctioned relationships such as boyfriend or girlfriend. Marriage relationships have more strict rules regarding cheating.

\textsuperscript{21} Chart from Rice (1980, p. 158).
episode portion of her narrative. The problem occurs when Jamie’s decision to see a new hairdresser ends in disaster (that is, a negative state). Kelli’s interjection encourages elaboration on this by eliciting Jamie’s evaluation of the situation (i.e. “I looked like a circus clown”). This is followed by a second episode which expands on the first. Jamie describes her intended

hair color and the problematic end result of looking like Rainbow Brite. After another (co-constructed) evaluative response, Jamie moves into the resolution. The preparatory action is the request for her hair lady to fix the botched dye job. At this point, Kelli intervenes to ensure that the consequences of Jamie’s original decision are made clear: “And she’s like that’s what happens when you cheat on me.” This remark is followed by Jamie giving a more complete ending to fill out the story schema by noting the state of the world (i.e. “She fixed it the best she could without it falling out”). According to Rice (1980), “in the case of stories, the (American) culturally assumed default value for
conclusions is a happy ending” (p. 155). Although this is not a standard “happy ending,”
the end state is more positive than the beginning of the story. The change of topic
immediately following Jamie’s statement is evidence that both speakers consider the
story complete. This indicates that Jamie and Kelli utilize the above narrative schema for
recounting and understanding experiences.

The final schema I will discuss is performance. In the sense used here,
performance, according to Bauman (as cited in Yankah, 1985, p. 133), broadly refers to
the “assumption of accountability to an audience for a display of communicative
competence.” Thus a performance schema requires a performer and an audience.
According to Yankah (1985), a performer may assume an authoritative role that allows
him/her to direct the flow of events (p. 136). Evidence for Kelli’s authority in the
conversation was provided in an earlier section. Yankah (1985) also notes that “the
verbal art performer submits himself to critical evaluation” (p. 135). Kelli’s chosen
platform is YouTube, where viewers are able to watch and comment on posted videos.
These comments often take the form of evaluation of a poster’s performance (e.g. “Great
videos”).

Bell (1984) states, “We may distinguish and rank audience roles according to
whether or not the persons are known, ratified, or addressed by the speaker…The main
character in the audience is the second person, the *addressee*, who is known, ratified, and
addressed” (p. 159; italics in original). For example, when Kelli addresses Jamie, Jamie
is considered to be the audience since she is known, ratified, and addressed by Kelli.
Kelli’s intention to post the video to YouTube suggests the possibility of another
audience. Other types of audience include auditors (those who are known and ratified,
but not addressed), overhearers (those who are known, but not ratified or addressed), and
eavesdroppers (those who are not known, ratified, or addressed) (Bell, 1984, p. 159).
These categories become less clear-cut when considering alternative forms of media.

YouTube allows posters to upload videos and viewers to comment on them. Viewers are
anonymous until they comment on a video, at which point their handle and comment are
visible to anyone who visits the site. Whether this counts as being known is open to
interpretation. Kelli’s reply to one commenter suggests that she knows who comments
on her videos. After MrShampooKing makes a negative comment about the video, Kelli
says “I see that you have not commented on any of my videos before.” Whether through
a search capability or reading every comment, Kelli can, to a certain extent, know her
viewers.22 YouTube also allows posters to block certain people from viewing and/or
commenting on their content. Viewers who are not blocked could be considered ratified,
although this is more passive than the literal meaning of the term. Kelli more actively
ratifies some viewers by replying to their comments, while others are ratified through
mention on a video. In the video I analyzed, Kelli says that “one of my viewers told me
to get a professional cape,” which ratifies that viewer. Since posters are generally aware
that their content may be viewed by others, some attempt to create a feeling of interaction
by addressing these potential viewers. Kelli does this as well. During the opening
sequence and lines 127-134, Kelli refers to Jamie in the third person, indicating that she
is addressing her viewers. For Kelli, the conversation does not stop at the end of the
video. Some of her viewers comment on her videos and she replies back, thus creating
an extended dialogue. Although viewers can comment on videos, they can only do so
after the fact and are not considered part of the conversation during the video. Since at

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22 KelliInTheRaw has well over 4,000 subscribers.
least some of Kelli’s viewers are known, ratified, and addressed, this indicates that the viewers hold a high position in Bell’s rank of audience roles.

Another piece of evidence supporting the performance schema in this context is the presence of formulaic phrasing. Shuck (2004) notes that “the tension between the familiar and the novel provides a foundation not only for the creation of a given performance but also for its acceptance by the audience AS a performance” (p. 203; emphasis in original). The video begins with Kelli saying “Hey guys, it’s me Kelli.” The significance of this greeting becomes apparent only after watching multiple videos posted to KelliInTheRaw. Every video begins with this same phrase, regardless of whether Kelli appears alone or with another person. For her viewers, this familiar phrase marks what follows as a performance for their benefit. Jamie recognizes the performance aspect of the video when Kelli asks her to recount the story of her (Jamie’s) hair dye experience even though Kelli is already aware of much of the story. Although Jamie is necessary to the conversation, the performance does not involve her as much as it does Kelli and her viewers.

The YouTube performance schema includes scripts for both performer and audience. The script of a performer includes attempts to take over the floor. As Yankah (1985) states, “Besides conferring psychological satisfaction, the art of performance is an attention ploy, temporally setting the individual apart for contemplation and enhancing his visibility in the performance setting” (p. 135; italics in original). It is the performer’s role, then, to center him- or her-self in the audience’s vision, to set up a scenario in which s/he is the central figure. Kelli does this by standing at or near the center of the screen, using expressive gestures, and varying her vocal tone when mimicking others. A
performer must also utilize accepted signals. As noted previously, formulaic phrases
serve to let the audience know that a performance is about to begin. Kelli’s greeting at
the beginning of the video does precisely this.

The audience has one main obligation. According to Yankah (1985), “the
audience is accountable to the culture at large for the exercise of good judgment in
instituting awards if the aesthetic principles of the community are upheld, and assessing
penalties if the communal aesthetic is subverted” (p. 135). In this case, viewers are
accountable to the YouTube community for upholding the relevant values. Awards
include “liking,” positive commenting, subscribing, and sharing; penalties include
“disliking,” negative commenting, and flagging. Commenting, in particular, is a good
way for viewers to let performers know what they think. Yankah (1985) notes that “[i]n
commenting on a performance, the audience, in essence, demonstrates its sensitivity to
the expressive quality of the performer’s enactment” (p. 134). Through comments, the
audience articulates the success or failure of a performance. Kelli shows her
understanding of the importance of comments by attempting to engage her viewers in the
conversation, or at least to make it appear that they are involved. By involving her
viewers, Kelli is more likely to elicit (positive) comments from them. Yankah (1985)
writes, “If the performer defaults, control over performance is lost to other competitors”
(p. 136). In other words, if Kelli fails to receive comments to show that she upholds the
standards of the YouTube community, she may lose viewers to the millions of other
videos there are to choose from. Thus Kelli’s obligations are also to entertain and engage
in order to receive feedback.

23 The exact values held by the community are not as important to this analysis as the presence of methods
for awarding and punishing performers.
Jamie takes advantage of the performance schema to perpetuate her ideology regarding Louisiana Creoles. Shuck (2004) states, “Because some texts are framed as performances, their aesthetic effects contribute to their memorability, and this helps them to become part of the expressive repertoires of particular listeners/readers/viewers” (p. 214). The dialog in lines 68-91 evokes what Shuck (2004) refers to as an exaggerated “us” and “them” mentality (p. 196). In this segment, Jamie juxtaposes Creoles, “swamp rats,” and French. In doing so, she emphasizes differences between swamp-life and city-life. That is, people who live in a swamp, eat rats, and speak French are different from city-dwellers who speak English and don’t eat rats. In all likelihood, Jamie does not know if her Creole relatives eat swamp rats or not since, by her own admission, she has not met any of them. However, Keating (2009) writes that “[w]hat is considered to be ‘truth’ and what counts as knowledge as well as how readily it can be acquired or shared is a form of power” (p. 1004). By stating, as a fact, that Creoles are called swamp rats because they used to eat them, Jamie claims the power of knowing and sharing information. Kelli recognizes this power in line 86 when she says “Like, I’ve learned a lot from people; I love this.” One aspect of ideologies is that they produce a limited number of “formulaically encoded themes and arguments” that speakers draw from to make their point in “aesthetically interesting ways” (Shuck, 2004, p. 202). Jamie utilizes the term “swamp rats,” a phrase that is in her limited repertoire of themes and arguments regarding her Creole family, which piques Kelli’s interest and excitement. By emphasizing the differences between herself and her Creole family (as well as Creoles in general), Jamie claims that Creoles are lower in the social order. According to Shuck (2004), Jamie may have been destined to use this negative term once the topic of heritage
was brought up. She states, “We thus see a unifying force in language, one that encourages the reiteration of certain ideological positions, partly because of their inseparable relation to pre-patterned, performable linguistic structures and partly because of an ideological context that accepts the truth of those positions” (Shuck, 2004, p. 218). In this sentence, Shuck summarizes her finding that certain ideologies are cued in a speaker’s mind based on the context of a conversation. Put another way, when certain phrases appear in the same context often enough, they become part of a script that tends to be followed by those who are familiar with it. I will add to this the possibility that Jamie uses the phrase “swamp rats” because it is one of the only things she knows about Creoles that she can use in conversation. In Jamie’s case, the script starts with ancestry or, specifically, Creoles. Once the script is cued up, inevitability takes over. This tendency is so strong, Shuck found, that even those who disagree with an ideology may still participate in the script.

CONCLUSION

Once I found that the speakers were located in east Texas when the video was made, it became possible to determine their place identity. Both speakers construct an “innovative” city-dweller identity by, for example, fronting /au/, laxing tense vowels, and pronouncing /ɹ/ after vowels. Kelli distances herself from a Southern identity, but not from a Texan one. Kelli’s longer utterances, interruptions, questions, and informal speech, relative to Jamie’s shorter utterances, politeness strategies, derogation of non-present outgroups, and more formal speech, mark her as holding more power and a higher status in the interaction. Kelli’s use of Valley Girl speech, like as a hedge, and backchanneling, as well as her claim to Madonna stages, indicates a feminine identity.
Jamie’s use of backchanneling, while less than expected, also signals a feminine identity. Jamie’s age identity is fairly straightforward. Her reference to working, use of *like*, and reference to Rainbow Brite put her age identity between 28 and 36 years old. Kelli, on the other hand, constructs a younger age identity through her use of *like*, but her claim to Madonna stages indicates that she is somewhat older. Although Jamie claims an innate Creole heritage, she distances herself from it through reference to a negative stereotype. She is ambivalent towards her Irish heritage. Since German and Jewish ethnicities are relatively unmarked, she makes no comments about these and seems to accept them. Kelli claims German, Irish, Indian, and Black Dutch. Her reconstruction of the Irish temperament to “attitude” indicates that she has strong ties to her Irish ancestry.

Although both speakers claim multiple ethnicities, Jamie labels herself negatively with “mutt” and Kelli labels herself positively with “Heinz 57.” These labels hint at the speakers’ ethnic ideologies: Kelli a “melting pot” assimilationist and Jamie a more conservative assimilationist. Both speakers hold similar schemas in relation to being at the salon, working hours, what counts as cheating, and telling a story.

Although this video is filled with instances of identity construction, there are gaps in the analysis that the video, alone, is unable to fill. While the footage with Jamie is limited to a dozen short videos, Kelli’s YouTube channel contains hundreds of hours of her own monologue and dialogue. Further research of the interactions between Kelli and Jamie would likely substantiate the current findings as well as provide additional insight into whether Jamie identifies with Texas or the South, whether her level of formality would converge with Kelli’s over time, or whether she has adopted more innovative forms of pronunciation. A review of conversations between Kelli and another person
would show how Kelli’s power, status, and age identities are constructed with different conversational partners. This analysis demonstrates that individuals actively construct identity through talk in order to align themselves with accepted group categories while simultaneously separating themselves from other categories.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPT

1 Kelli: Hey, guys. It’s me, Kelli, and Jamie (indicating with both arms, fingers spread, to the person next to her), and this time we’re gonna really talk about hair. And I need to set the timer because I think- I just have this feeling that we’re gonna get a little crazy and (said while laughing) forget about what time it is, so it’s there to remind me to stop talking and change the video. I was so upset. I cut my hair. They’re like cut your hair again. And so I cut my hair, and it was like thirteen minutes, and I also said something I wasn’t supposed to on it.

2 Jamie: Uh-huh.

3 Kelli: Uh, yeah, I know. So, um, I couldn’t put that on there, so… I didn’t have the (Oh) timer goin’. Yeah. I know. So I have to set the timer now. Anyway, one of my viewers told me to get a professional cape so we have a (spoken in a deeper voice) professional cape (spoken quietly) to put on you, (normal voice) like you’re in the salon. Only I don’t charge you (both laugh). So how much do you pay, like, the salon that you go to? Cause I know the name of your salon, but, um, do you go to different ones or do you go to the same one?

4 Jamie: Uh, I usually go to the same place, but, the lady, she only works Monday through Friday and, course, I work. Uh, so I-I kinda cheated on her and I went somewhere else.

5 Kelli: (Mock shocked look.) Oh, (spraying Jamie’s hair with spray bottle) no.

6 Jamie: Yes. And…

7 Kelli: You cheater you.

8 Jamie: But the lady I usually go to I (A’right) pay, like, sixty-five dollars for a cut, which – she’s amazing – but

9 Kelli: That’s a pretty good cut.

10 Jamie: When I cheated…

11 Kelli: Oh, no.

12 Jamie: …it was a disaster. Yeah.

13 Kelli: (Picking up a comb from counter) Now, is this like a cut, or like a cut and, um, like, um, hair color…?

14 Jamie: They did a hair color and a cut. The cut was ok, but the hair color was horrible.

15 Kelli: I looked like a circus clown.

16 Jamie: Oh, man. (Jamie chuckles) (Kelli puts down comb and picks up sprayer again) And I saw you like the day after (uh-huh) it happened, before you got it fixed.

17 Jamie: It was so bad.
Kelli: (Glances at camera) Oh my gosh. It was, like, red (yeah). (Glances at camera) Like a color red that I can’t even explain.

Jamie: They were supposed to put, like, uh, uh, a brown with a reddish color, low lights, and blonde highlights; and they, um, actually, did, um, all over blonde (uh-huh) and then tried to do the brown-red on top of it.

Kelli: On top of it?

Jamie: And it wasn’t a…

Kelli: So, like, it drank up all the color, then.

Jamie: Yes.

Kelli: It’s like sh-

Jamie: It wasn’t brown-red at all (Oh, man). It turned out Easter-pink, hot pink, red, blonde, orange, yellow. And it was, it looked like Rainbow Brite, or something (laughs).

Kelli: I know that like everybody listening has a horror story (puts down sprayer and picks up comb and combs Jamie’s hair) of stuff that has happened to their hair.

Jamie: I looked in the mirror and I was about to cry. I was just like, Oh my gosh!

Kelli: Oh, you poor thing! Oh my gosh! (In a high-pitched voice) [unintelligible] you.

Jamie: And then I had to call my hair lady and tell her. I had to say I cheated on you.

Kelli: Oh, no! And she’s like that’s what happens (wags finger) when you cheat on me.

Jamie: (Laughs) She-

Kelli: Cause she knows you’re not gonna go anywhere else anymore (Kelli laughs).

Jamie: Yeah. She fixed it the best she could without it falling out. Um, so…

Kelli: Is your head like all tender?

Jamie: Hu-uh (shakes head side to side).

Kelli: OK, that’s good, cause I was like tryin’ to be real careful. And – your hair is thick.

Jamie: Yeah, it’s…

Kelli: And it, it’s got like – what is – what is your background? Like, where does your hair come from? (both laugh)

Jamie: I have, um, some Creo’ and…

Kelli: Creo’. Now, that’s, like, in the, um, Louisiana, um…

Jamie: Yes.
Kelli: (Glances at camera) On um, uh… Now I know there’s a bunch in Beaumont. I have a sister in Beaumont (uh-huh) that I go see. And, and they–they’ve got a lot that Cajun and Creole there.

Jamie: Yeah, yeah. Call ’em Louisiana swamp rats (laughs).

Kelli: (Laughs) Louisiana swamp rats.

Jamie: That’s what they call ’em.

Kelli: Love it.

Jamie: They used to hunt swamp rats and eat ’em and…

Kelli: Really!!?

Jamie: Yeah. They speak French so (yeah) I really haven’t really met any of my family there, but…

Kelli: Oh, really? Now is it, like, (finger quotes) true French or is it, like, you know, Spanglish, you know, like, Spanish and English? Is it, like, French and English? Or French and something else? Or is it just strictly French?

Jamie: It…

Kelli: (Looking at camera) Like, I’ve learned a lot from people; I love this.

Jamie: It’s sh – I’m not sure, really (laughs). That side of the family I really don’t, uh, know.

Kelli: So, so what’s, like, the rest of it? Let’s see. You’ve got Creole, and…

Kelli: German.

Jamie: German. (Excitedly) Hey I got some German, too.

Kelli: And Jewish.

Kelli: Jewish? No Jewish.

Jamie: Yeah. And I’m- I’m quite…

Kelli: I think I have a Jewish nose, though. (Poses for camera to show off nose)

Kelli: (Laughs) I’m quite the mutt. So you can call me, um…

Kelli: I’m Heinz 57. Nice to meet you mutt. (Both laugh)

Kelli: Yeah, I’ve got, like, Black Dutch, which is, like, the dark, dark hair, pale skin, dark eyes (uh-huh) and I’ve got some Irish, and German, and Indian…

Jamie: Got Irish, too.

Kelli: Irish. Like, how much Irish?

Jamie: Let’s see (eyes looking up, thinking). My…

Kelli: Like, how’s your, did you check your attitude today? (Laughs)
Jamie: It’s my, my mom’s dad. Yeah, he’s Irish.

Kelli: Your mom’s dad’s Irish. Was it, like, flaming Irish hair?

Jamie: Like, red hair, green eyes… And he’s really, really, really mean. He was mean. He passed, but…

Kelli: Awww…

Jamie: …everybody said he had evil in his blood

Kelli: Oh, really?

Jamie: cause he was just always so mean, but I (inaudible)

Kelli: Oh, he was the Irish one?

Jamie: Uh-huh.

Kelli: (Sarcastic tone, rolling eyes) Well, we got some Irish in my family. I call it attitude. I try to lighten it up a little. It’s not mean, it’s just attitude. (Laughs)

Jamie: (Laughs) Yeah…

Kelli: Your hair is, like, curling as I’m doing this. I thought I was going to be able to comb straight through this. (Looking at the camera, Jamie notices and also looks at the camera briefly) This might be one whole video of me combing through your hair.

Jamie: (laughs) I have really coarse hair.

Kelli: It is. It’s, like, so much thicker than it looks. You have to do, like, a great deal to your hair to make it look so good every day.

Jamie: Yeah…

Kelli: (Looking at the camera) Jamie’s hair looks good like all the time. She’s like this hair guru. You should have your own channel (Jamie laughs). You’re like this hair guru, and she does makeup, and, and all that, and… And, um, Jamie was in entertainment one time, so she’s, uh, she kinda knows the business a little, and… Did you have to – did you teach yourself makeup, or, like, did you always just know how to do this, cause you… I mean, I see a lot of- a lit of- a lot of women, they are, are so pretty, but they don’t know what to do with what they’ve got. (Looking at camera) Jamie knows what to do with what she’s got.

Jamie: Well, my mom, she, you know, showed me growing up on how to do makeup and stuff like that. She’wz very, um, in the Madonna stages, like, um, the poofy hair (Kelli raises her hand), the, the spandex with the cowboy boots and the cutoff jean shorts…

Kelli: That’s me.

Jamie: …and the hair scrunched up on the side (That’s me) and lots of makeup (laughs).

Kelli: Yes, lots of makeup. I never got over that stage. You can tell… (both laugh)

Jamie: Yeah…

Kelli: I went to mac yesterday… Oh, my gosh. I swear, I’m never going to get your hair combed out (Jamie laughs). Does it ever comb?
Jamie: Uh-huh (Laughs).
Kelli: Like how long does it take you to comb your hair?
Jamie: I, I’m just probly a lot rougher with it.
Kelli: Oh, yeah.
Jamie: I’m just like…
Kelli: Well, I’m so afraid I’m gonna hurt your hair, rip it outta your head, cause like, I’m like so tender that way.
Jamie: I’m not. I just do it
Kelli: (laughs) I can tell. So I’ve got two combs and I’m not sure which comb – this is like the comb-out comb, and (sigh)… Are you sure that’s not hurting?
Jamie: It’s not.
Kelli: Cause I would like be hitting someone in the nose if they were combing my hair this way. Just bop ‘em like that (both laugh) (Kelli pretends to be punching someone in the face behind her) – “stop it.” But, then again, that’s why I do my own hair. An- and, uh, I don’t know if you see my videos on, like, cleaning your teeth (Jamie purses lips and runs tongue across her teeth) and stuff like that, um, but I use these products on my teeth so there’s no tartar and no plaque on, on my teeth. I only go to the dentist like (looking at camera) once every, like, five years, um, because I don’t like to. (Scared look on face) I don’t like going to the dentist. So I don’t have any cavities, at all, I take really good care of my teeth. And, um, so I don’t like anybody touching my hair, or my teeth, or anything (both laugh).