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On the Mediation of Class, Race & Gender: Intonation on Sports Radio Talk Shows

On the Mediation of Class, Race & Gender: Intonation on Sports Radio Talk Shows

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This paper looks at the role of prosody and intonation in the negotiation of social identities on talk-radio. Analysis of tape-recorded interactions between hosts and callers on sports-talk radio call-in shows demonstrates the use of variation in linguistic form to negotiate social identities, while showing how the interactional achievement of identity mediates public discourses of race, class, and gender in American society.

Data for this study come from tape-recordings of listener call-in shows aired on Albuquerque's AM sports-talk radio station. Intonational patterns are analyzed instrumentally, using pitch-tracking software implemented on an IBM-compatible personal computer. The meaning and function of these intonational forms are elaborated through analysis of the interactional and discursive context within which the forms are used.

Findings indicate that hosts manipulate their prosodic style as a claim to a particular form of masculinity, and that this claim gains its efficacy by evoking the culturally meaningful trope of *liveness*. Investigation of the dialogic and intertextual cultural meanings generated by such stylistic variation in language use illustrates change and transformation in American discourses of gender. The discourse of sport in the U.S. is of crucial importance because prominent cultural images, such as masculinity, health, power, success, and free enterprise are metaphorically represented, and thereby mediated through sport.

Interactive talk-shows play an increasingly significant role in American media, as social, political, and moral issues are publicly debated on popular television and radio shows. Paralleling this growth in talk radio, is the growth of sports talk shows. Discourse about sports has recently exploded into public consciousness, as the spectacular coverage of OJ Simpson's murder trial, Magic Johnson's HIV infection and subsequent return to professional basketball, and the 1995 baseball strike attest. These media events dramatically show that gender identities, racial tensions, and class relations in American society are worked out in discourse about sports. The medium of talk radio is a powerful force both in shaping and contesting public consciousness, and this paper describes the linguistic mechanisms central to this process.

Specifically, I look at the language of sports-talk radio shows to discuss the use of intonational style in negotiating social identities. Talk shows exemplify the creative use of language in the negotiation of identities, and sports-talk radio shows are distinctive in their elaboration of speech styles and focus on performance. I will argue that nationally syndicated sports-talk show hosts share a distinctive feature of intonational style – namely a lack of phrase-final lowering – which constructs a particular (and particularly dominant) form of masculinity because it evokes the cultural trope of *liveness* (cf. Meintjes 1995). The lack of phrase-final lowering constitutes a very marked style in the context of talk-radio

shows, but an unmarked (i.e. normal) style in the speech of announcers doing play-by-play broadcasts of live sporting events. Use of this intonational style in talk-radio shows therefore evokes the social meaning of *liveness* associated with live sporting events and central to (certain) dominant forms of masculinity.

1 Background

1.1 Theoretical Approach to Discourse and Society

This work is based on an approach to the study of language, culture, and society that views language as both (and simultaneously) reflective, and constitutive of social life. Discourse – the patterns of actual use of language in social interaction – forms the nexus of this interaction, as well as the site of its unfolding (Sherzer 1987; Urban & Sherzer 1991). Such a view requires that the relationship between language and society be seen as a process, as a spiral relationship between structures and structuring tendencies (cf. Bourdieu 1977), and opens up the analysis of power relations obtaining within social formations to the role of individual agency. Within such a perspective, the notion of mediation – the relationship between two abstract entities in the process of mutual influence and adaptation – becomes very important. Talk Radio is a classic mediator: representing both the institutional voice of power and the individual voice of resistance, it mediates between the individual and the institution, the personal and the structural.

1.2 Sports and Society

In his essay on Balinese cockfighting, Clifford Geertz summarizes the relationship between sports and society:

As much of America surfaces in a ball park, on a golf links, at a race track, or around a poker table, much of Bali surfaces in a cock ring. For it is only apparently cocks that are fighting there. Actually, it is men. (Geertz 1973:417)

Sporting events in American society are, in Geertzian terms, a text that Americans enact in order to be able to interpret. Like other cultural practices it represents – in order to mediate – social structure and cultural values. The meaning of American sport is closely tied to cultural notions of *masculinity*. As Robert Connell puts it, "images of ideal masculinity are constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport ... sport is one of the main ways in which the [social] power of men becomes 'naturalized'" (Connell 1990:84-5). Yet sport is also a "contested terrain," as Michael Messner has pointed out, in which historically specific notions of masculinity are interwoven among, mediated by, and co-constructed with, equally historically specific structures of nation, race, and class (Messner et al. 1993:122).

Spectator sports arose in the United States in the late 19th century, a time of massive social and cultural change brought about in part by the industrial revolution. Sporting events functioned to symbolically reinforce social identities that were increasingly coming under question. National identity, for example, came to be felt and expressed in the celebration of Thanksgiving as a national and secular holiday, and Thanksgiving emerged as an important popular ritual in conjunction with a sporting event, as 40,000 people

paraded to the 1893 Princeton-Yale football game. It is not long thereafter that the Olympic Games began to link sport and national identity in more direct ways.

Social class identities are historically mediated by spectator sports as well. In the wake of the industrial revolution, precisely the time that physical labor – associated with working classes – lost prestige, the upper classes became athletic. The original Thanksgiving Day football game involved two elite colleges, Princeton and Yale; the holiday and the sport were popularized much later when the traditional rivalry between the Army and Navy academies emerged. Christopher Lasch comments that "having suppressed or driven to the margins of society many of the recreations of the people, the *haute bourgeoisie* proceeded to adapt the games of its class enemies to its own purposes" (Lasch 1985:58).

Racial difference is also constructed through sport. The late 19th century was a time when policies restricting immigration into the United States became a battleground for racist ideologies (cf. Gould 1981), as well as a time when (male) athletic prowess was constructed as proof of racial superiority. Thus in turn-of-the-century boxing, promising white prizefighters, such as Jim Jeffries, were labeled *The Great White Hope*, and professional sports leagues were off-limits to black athletes until the 1950s.

As restrictions on minority participation in American sports eased, however, discursive constructions of racial difference increased. Many modern professional sports show prominent differences in the participation roles allotted to black and white athletes. In American Football, for example, running backs, wide receivers, defensive ends, and cornerbacks are disproportionately black, while linebackers, kickers, offensive linemen, and quarterbacks, are disproportionately white. Similar racial differentiation by position exists in professional basketball and baseball.¹ These distinctions draw on the cultural opposition between the 'wild and explosive' ('black') and 'rational and controlled' ('white') positions, an expression of the nature/culture, body/mind oppositions, worked out in this case in terms of the epitomization of black bodies. It has often been noted, for example, that sports announcers tend to praise white players with reference to their intelligence and hard work, while black players are often credited with 'natural athletic ability' (Messner et al. 1993).

Organized spectator sports also defined and reinforced gender identities. The turn of the century brought about the *crisis of masculinity*, in which "the... decline of the practical relevance of physical strength in work and in warfare [made] representations of the male body as strong, virile, and powerful [take] on increasingly important ideological and symbolic significance" (Messner 1992:168). Female participation in sports was powerfully constrained by discourses of medicine, as well as etiquette. As women began to participate in organized sporting activities, beginning in the early 20th century, they did so in powerfully gender-marked ways. Basketball, for example, was modified for female participation by "purging the game of any objectionable, 'unladylike' features... [restricting] women from excessive running, close guarding, ball-snatching, arm movement, and perspiration" (Cahn 1994). Such constraints on female athletics held sway until the 1950s.

Sport is thus a cultural domain on which ideologies of social identity are contested. Importantly, this contestation occurs in discourse as much as in practice. As Christopher Lasch notes, "the rise of spectator sports to their present importance coincides historically with the rise of mass production, which intensifies the needs sport satisfies while at the same time creating the technical capacity to promote and market athletic contests to a vast

¹ These positions have disproportionately high numbers of white or black players within the overall context of a numerical dominance of black players in the sport as a whole.

market" (Lasch 1985:51). Yet, as Michael Messner has pointed out, "viewing an athletic contest on television is not the same as watching a contest 'live'" (Messner et al. 1993:132) and "any analysis of the broader social meanings of contemporary sport must take into account the fact that for millions of people, their dominant experience of sport is not as athletes, but as spectators of a mediated public spectacle" (Messner 1992:164). There is thus a hierarchy of signification involving sports practice, sports presentation, or broadcasting, and sports representation, or discourse about sport.² In order to understand the meanings of sport, one must understand the meaning of discourse-about-sport.

2 Sports Discourse

2.1 Data: Sports Talk Radio

Data for this study come from tape-recordings of local and national sports talk-shows aired on the Albuquerque All-Sports radio station between March and October of 1995. KRZY was an AM country music station until July 1994 when they switched the bulk of their programming to sports talk radio, a move which catapulted the station into ratings prominence despite the loss of their female audience.³ The station maintains affiliations with several nationwide sports networks, which provide both talk-show programming, and play-by-play broadcasts of live sporting events. My corpus includes over ten hours of recordings from five different talk-shows, as well as several hours of play-by-play broadcast from two kinds of live sporting event.

Call-in talk shows organize talk formulaically: calls last just a few minutes; the caller provides an opinion for the host to comment on; and speech is characteristically informal. Transcript #1, taken from *The Sports Animal House*, a call-in show produced locally in Albuquerque and hosted by the local personality Andrew Paul, illustrates these points:⁴

Transcript 1. Call to *The Sports Animal House*

Local Host: Paul,
welcome to the sports animal house,
you're on with Andrew Paul,
how you doin'?

²This 3-way division is analogous to Barthes' distinction between *matter*, *use*, and *langue* in non-linguistic semiotic systems (Barthes 1981). For Barthes, looking at fashion, it was important to distinguish between clothes as items of practical consequence, or matter (keep warm, cover the body, etc.) and clothes as worn, in semiotically meaningful combinations and alternations (low-cut dresses, muscle shirts and tight jeans, etc.), and the discourse about clothing found in (for example) fashion magazines. Barthes argues that it is only at the level of *langue*, i.e. magazine discourse, that a truly arbitrary (and socially significant) relationship exists between form and meaning, since it is here that a particular set of individuals set up these relationships which then obtain for the masses of 'speaking' (i.e. clothes-wearing) individuals. The parallel drawn here is between the discourse about sport and the discourse of fashion magazines.

³The station's own listenership statistics show that KRZY has the highest percentage of male listeners of any radio station in Albuquerque.

⁴At the time that this data was collected, *The Sports Animal House* was broadcast weekday evenings from 5:00 to 8:00 pm.

Caller #1: Pretty good,
 uh,
 Local Host: Yea,
 what's goin on?
 Caller #1: Hey,
 how's it goin?
 Local Host: Good,
 Caller #1: Uh,
 want to talk a little bit of Lobo NMSU game here coming up,
 Local Host: Yea let's do it,
 Lobos Aggies,
 are you uh– which– which is the team you follow?
 Caller #1: Neither one,
 Local Host: Why not?
 Caller #1: Well,
 they both stink,⁵

Considerable attention is paid in this segment to formulaic greeting routines. The host, for example, takes the call with an elaborately embedded, four-tiered first-pair part to a formulaic adjacency pair used in telephone greetings. The host calls the caller by his first name, provides a welcome-message, introduces himself by name, and asks 'How you doin?'. This elaborate turn embeds multiple forms of the greeting routine as choices for the caller to respond to. By the time the greeting routine is concluded caller and host have exchanged six turns at talk.

This elaboration of the greeting routine functions to establish rapport between caller and host and to frame the interaction in a maximally casual way. The casual nature of the context is also constructed through choice of language style, as can be seen in such casual forms as *doin*, *goin on*, and *let's do it* in the host's speech. This casual speech style is reciprocated by the caller, as we see in his use of the vivid slang form, *stink*.

This same form, *stink*, also demonstrates another important aspect of discourse on these call-in shows, namely that there is a high premium placed on being opinionated, confrontational, and negative. The following example, taken from *The Bench*, a nationally syndicated show with a host named "Ferrell," demonstrates this latter point.⁶

Transcript 2. Call to *The Bench*

National Host #1: 800 Bench 29,
 in Chicago
 they used to go in there
 and rage,
 I'd been in there a million times,
 the fan in New York,
 Joe's hangin out at Hell's Kitchen,
 what's up,

⁵The caller is referring to the (then upcoming) game between two intra-state rival collegiate football teams in New Mexico, the University of New Mexico Lobos and the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Aggies. Although popular locally, in recent years neither team has had success on a regional or national level.

⁶At the time that this data was collected, *The Bench* was broadcast weekday nights from 8:00 to 10:00 pm.

- Caller #2: Ferrell,
 what's goin on,
 National Host #1: Not much () Rover,
 you've got it all,
 Caller #2: Uh listen,
 (Don Malone) of the Islanders,
 you've gotta get this guy fired,
 he's terrible,
 he ruined the franchise,
 National Host #1: Yea,
 he pisses everybody off,
 doesn't he, ...⁷

In this sample the style of language-use differs considerably from that used in the local talk show cited above. Ferrell uses a very marked style, especially noticeable in a gravelly voice quality that makes his speech sound like a growl. Interestingly, Ferrell frequently switches in and out of this marked voice quality, indicating (and simultaneously giving notice) that the growl is a meaningful style, rather than a "natural" trait.

There are many stunning features of the language use on these talk shows in addition to this marked voice quality, including extensive use of in-group slang and taboo words (cf. *pisses ... off* above), syntactic abbreviation (cf. Ferguson 1983), evocation of stereotyped regional, ethnic, racial, and social class dialects, and the co-construction of style between caller and host. Here, however, I would like to focus on one aspect of intonational style. The nationally syndicated hosts share with each other – and in this regard differ considerably from the local host – a pattern of prosody which de-emphasizes finality of utterance, thought, and theme. I will explicate this pattern and its meaning by comparing the speech of two talk-show hosts: the local host, Andrew Paul, and Jim Rome, the host of the nationally syndicated show, *The Jungle*.⁸

2.2 Talk-Show Intonation

The approach to the description of intonational form, function, and meaning adopted here draws heavily from the work of Cindy McLemore, Janet Pierrehumbert, and Julia Hirschberg (McLemore 1991; Pierrehumbert 1980; Hirschberg and Pierrehumbert 1986). Pierrehumbert's 1980 dissertation broke new ground in the linguistic analysis of prosody by using instrumental pitch-tracking to aid in the description of intonational patterns. Hirschberg and Pierrehumbert (1986) demonstrated that such a quantitative approach to intonation can contribute to discourse analysis by showing that speakers can adjust the pitch levels at the ends of intonational phrases in order to communicate the thematic structure of, and provide cohesion to narrative discourse. Finally, McLemore's work on the role of phrase-final rises in in-group speech among members of a university sorority focused attention on the very powerful social and affective meanings communicated by intonation in American English.

⁷The caller is referring to the (then) coach of the New York Islanders professional ice-hockey team, Don Malone.

⁸At the time that this data was collected, *The Jungle* was broadcast weekday afternoons from 12:00 to 4:00 pm.

In this paper I look closely at the variation in phrase-final pitch heights within turns of talk by talk-show hosts. Intonation patterns were analyzed instrumentally, using pitch-tracking software implemented on a personal computer.⁹ The figures below map the fundamental frequency (in Hertz) of the speaker's voice measured at the place nearest the end of each intonational phrase.¹⁰ Intonational phrases, called "lines" on the graphs, were coded impressionistically, relying on prosodic features of pitch-accent and boundary-tone, as well as pause. As a point of reference, I have included on each graph a horizontal line (provisionally called a *discourse baseline*¹¹) drawn at the pitch height corresponding to the lowest pitch achieved in the utterance. This minimum value is taken to be a local minimum, with reference to which interlocutors interpret other phrase-final pitch levels as expressing either relative finality or continuity (i.e., forward-looking cohesion).

Figure 1 (over) shows the phrase-final pitch height for each of the 16 intonational phrasing units identified in Text 1, a multi-clause utterance taken from the speech of Andrew Paul, the local host.

Text 1. Andrew Paul (local host)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Phrase</u>
1	They're gonna go with Mike Buck first,
2	obviously when uh- Krieg- Krieg doesn't do well,
3	and then Stoney is the third option this year,
4	a- I don't think many teams feel comfortable,
5	putting a rookie,
6	in in a starting role,
7	if- if the Cardinals, have a horrendous season,
8	and they're way out of a playoff berth,
9	I think there's a chance maybe weeks, uh,
10	fifteen,
11	sixteen,
12	that- that Stoney gets an opportunity,
13	to- to do something,
14	to see if he's gonna be a-
15	a player next year,
16	but I wouldn't expect to see anything until then,

There is considerable variability in the phrase-final pitch in Paul's speech, including some very high pitches, which correspond to final pitch-rises, such as in phrases #10 and #11. The distribution of phrase-final pitch-heights follows a clear pattern, in which very-low lows mark a thematic break between Paul's first sub-point (that teams don't feel comfortable playing a rookie quarterback) and his second sub-point (that Stoney might play late in a horrendous season). This kind of information-structure patterning has been pointed out by Hirschberg and Pierrehumbert (1986).

⁹The signal-processing algorithm was developed and implemented on a PC-based microcomputer by Kenneth Whistler and Anthony Woodbury with the support of NSF Grant BNS-86-18271 to the University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁰Note that in many cases this is not coincident with the line's minimum pitch value, since many of the lines end on a continuation high-pitch, or have an L* accent which drops below the final pitch level.

¹¹This "discourse baseline" differs both from the "speaker baseline" and "reference line" parameters defined variously by Liberman, Pierrehumbert, Beckman, and others concerned with declination effects within an intonational phrase.

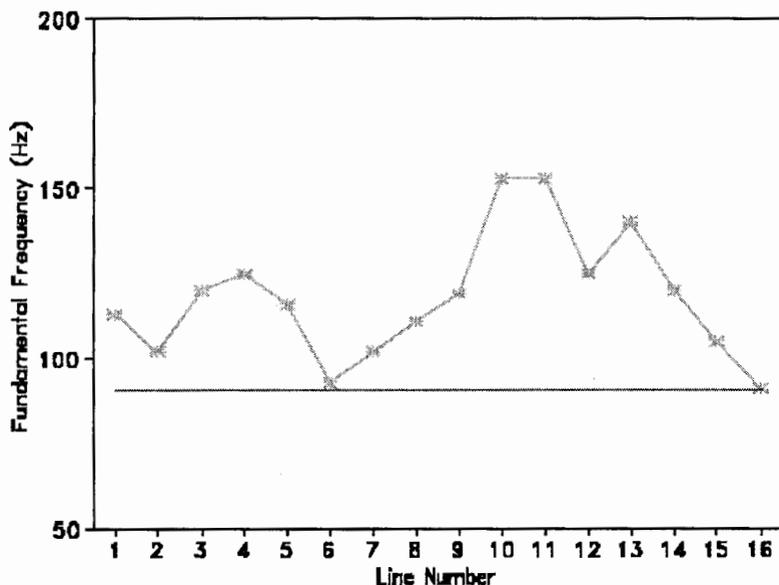


Figure 1: Phrase-Final pitch compared to 'discourse baseline' for local host

In sharp contrast, Figure 2a, which shows corresponding data from the speech of the national host, Jim Rome (transcribed as Text 2a), indicates a very different pattern. This segment is taken from a regular feature of Rome's show, in which he reads messages that listeners have sent him by fax.¹²

Text 2a. Narrative Segment, National Host (Jim Rome)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Phrase</u>
	Checkin the faxes,
	quick hit,
	nice cross-section,
	we got one from Omaha,
	one from So-Cal,
	and one from San Antonio,
	one from Boulder,
	and one from So-Cal,

¹²The fact that fax submissions can be such a prominent part of Rome's show has interesting implications for the class and occupational status of his audience.

Omaha,
 1 yea OJ,
 2 while South Central LA was burning,
 3 and the world was watching,
 4 I'm sure that deep-seated black Angst,
 5 which was razing,
 6 this LA community,
 7 was burning just as deep in you,
 8 while you were on the back nine,
 9 of some swank country club,
 10 Brandon,
 I know exactly what you're tryin to say,
 11 but I won't say it either,
 12 I neither can agree or disagree with that,

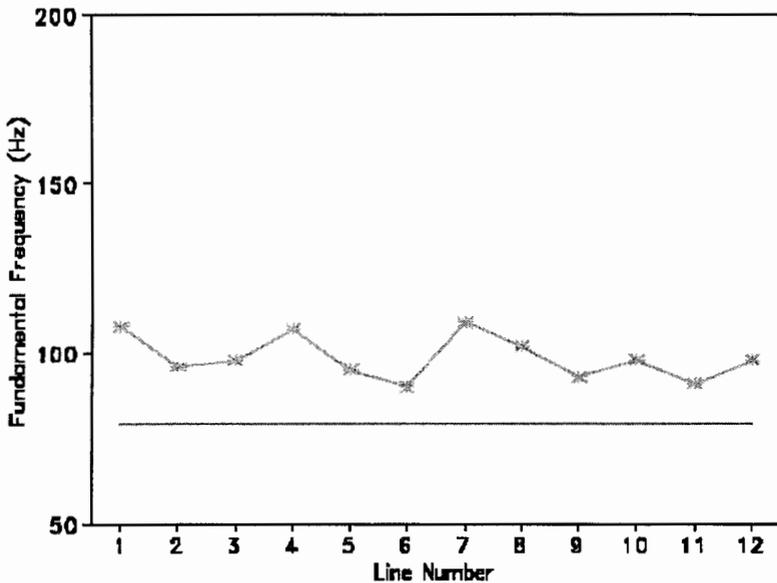


Figure 2a: Phrase-final pitch compared to 'discourse baseline' for national host

Rome's speech is characterized here by a very narrow range of possible values for the phrase-final pitch, an erratic relationship between final pitch and thematic structure within the utterance, and maintenance of final pitches well above the discourse baseline, the lowest pitch value achieved during the turn-at-talk.

Further evidence of Rome's distinctive pattern comes from Rome's own style-shifting. Figure 2b compares phrase-final pitches to the *discourse baseline* for his reading

of a second fax (transcribed as Text 2b below). Notice that in this case Rome's treatment of phrase-final pitch is more like that of Andrew Paul than it is like his own phrasing in the previous example: namely, there is a wide range of phrase-final values; his pitch drops to very-low lows at several points in the utterance; and there is a correspondence between thematic structure and phrase-final pitches.

Text 2b. Narrative Segment, National Host (Jim Rome)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Phrase</u>
1	Mr Rome,
2	for all the people,
3	compelled to offer their opinion,
4	on the OJ verdict,
5	you are neither judge,
6	or jury,
7	my friends,
8	in this country,
9	you are innocent,
10	until proven guilty,
11	in this city,
12	where prejudice,
13	either covert,
14	or overt,
15	is everywhere,
16	a majority of blacks,
17	would be very hard pressed,
18	to convict a black man,
19	if there was any doubt,
20	in the prosecution's case,
21	if OJ did commit the crimes,
22	he will never wipe the blood from his (conscience),
23	innocent or guilty,
24	he is free,
25	nothing will change that,
26	deal with it,
27	moratorium,
28	now,

The first fax is written in what can be called the dominant style of the show – aggressively critical, syntactically abbreviated, lexically in-group – and is read by Rome in his "on-stage" voice (cf. Scott 1985, 1990). The second fax is written in a very different style, beginning "Mr. Rome", when most callers address Rome by first name (Jim), or nickname (Romey). This second fax is also read in a very different style. As with Ferrell's use of significant switching in his growl-voice, here too the difference, the shift, the frame-break, serves to highlight the meaning, and meaningfulness, of the form.

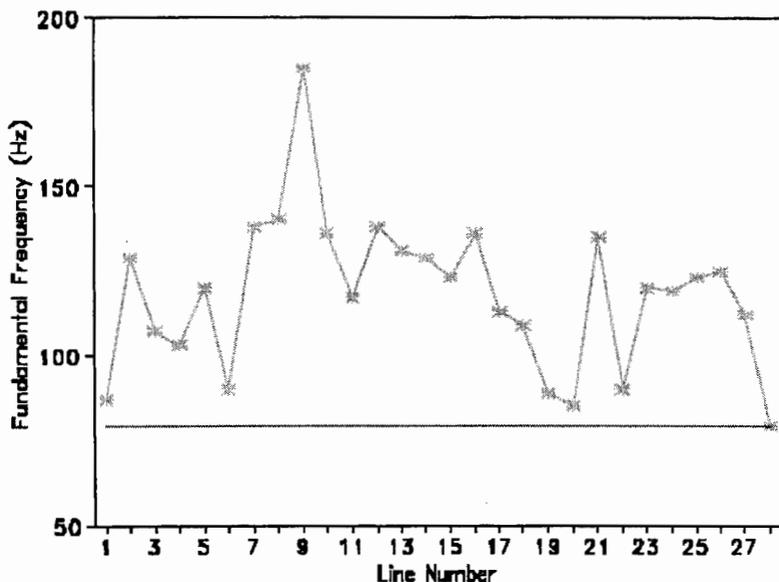


Figure 2b: Phrase-final pitch compared to 'discourse baseline' for national host.

3 Discussion

I turn now from a description of form to a description of meaning. As Greg Urban has noted:

speech styles are ... culturally constituted signals, [that] play a role in the creation and transmission of culture, and ... make possible the 'semiotic mediation' by means of which the world, ... and culture itself, is brought into intellectual and emotional focus. (Urban 1985:328)

Speech styles set up a relationship of markedness between special styles and special contexts-of-use on the one hand, and everyday styles and everyday contexts-of-use on the other, such that the use of elements from a special style asserts the situational salience of some aspects of the meaning of the special context. Indexicality is thus a linguistic gloss for the notion of intertextuality (Bakhtin 1981; Kristeva 1986).

In the national sports-radio talk shows, the prosodic style that de-emphasizes finality is iconic of, and therefore indexically evokes the prosodic style of play-by-play radio broadcasts of live sporting events, an iconicity that is clear from a comparison of the above talk-show data to speech taken from live play-by-play broadcast of a football

game.¹³ Figure 3 plots the pitch heights of the phrase-endings for the play-by-play segment, comparing them, as before, to the *discourse baseline* for the announcer's utterance (transcribed as Text 3).

Text 3. Live Play-by-Play Broadcast Sample

<u>Line</u>	<u>Phrase</u>
1	Dangerous receiver,
2	Terry Glenn,
3	lines up wide to the right,
4	second down,
5	call it seven,
6	for Ohio State,
7	snap,
8	hand-off,
9	George,
10	running to his right,
11	looking for a hole,
12	crosses,
13	over the 35 yard line,
14	he's down to the 39,
15	but a penalty marker,
16	comes flyin in,
17	from behind the play,
18	left side cornerback,
19	Brian Miller,
20	credited with the tackle,
21	but we're gonna get a holding penalty here,
22	against Ohio State.

Figure 3 shows long stretches of play-by-play speech during which phrases end on relatively high pitches (cf. lines #1-16), similar to the pattern found for Jim Rome's speech (Figure 2a). Notice, however, that the play-by-play announcer does in fact construct thematic 'paragraphs' (cf. Hirschberg and Pierrehumbert 1986) in his speech by dropping his phrase-final pitch in line #17. The adoption of the play-by-play style in talk-radio discourse is thus partial and exaggerated, taking on aspects of a stereotype. Greg Urban has labeled this phenomenon "expressive restriction with formal amplification" (Urban 1985:327).

By adopting (or adapting) the form of play-by-play speech into the discourse of talk radio, these hosts are making meanings from live sporting events relevant to the mediated context of discourse about sport. The *liveness* of athletic practice is thus symbolically transferred from the sporting event, through the mediation of broadcast, to the context of sports radio talk. The importance of the *liveness* trope lies in its link to cultural notions of (dominant) masculinity.

¹³This recording was made of a broadcast of the college football game between Ohio State and Penn State in November, 1995.

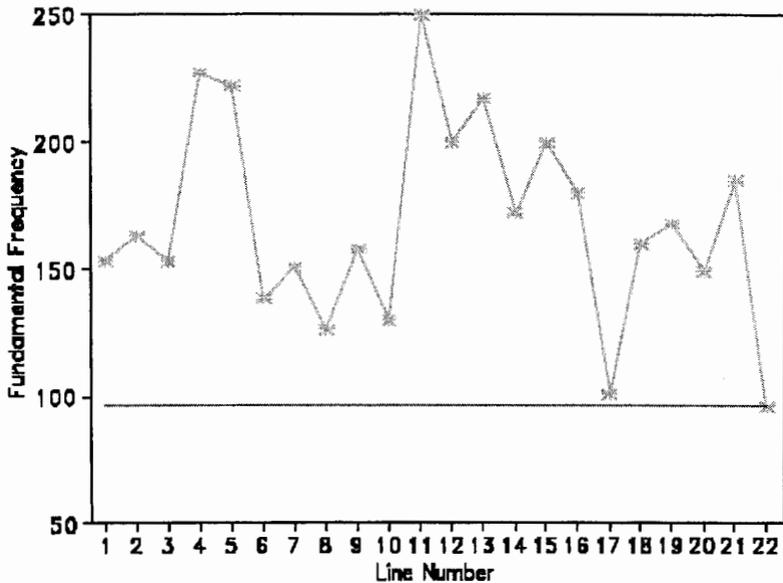


Figure 3: Phrase-final pitch compared to 'discourse baseline' for live play-by-play broadcast

In linking sports and masculinity through the metaphor of *liveness*, I am borrowing from the work of Louise Meintjes. Meintjes describes *liveness* as the underlying trope in the discourse about market-oriented black musics in South Africa, and she shows how the notion of *liveness* mediates discourses of race and ethnicity in the performance, production, and consumption of Zulu music (Meintjes 1995).

Whereas for music *liveness* resides in rhythm, for sport *liveness* relates to action, power, movement, and explosiveness.¹⁴ It is precisely these qualities that the discourse of sport (and most powerfully the discourse of sports-talk radio) constructs as masculine and prestigious. A dominant masculine identity is thus constructed through talk by borrowing from a discourse that privileges not only male as opposed to female qualities, but also black as opposed to white and working class as opposed to middle class. This dual displacement of sports practice into sports discourse and cultural values into semiotically meaningful speech styles obscures (while effecting) in this case the powerful cooptation of potentially resistant voices into institutionally dominant identities.

¹⁴Meintjes has observed that there is a close link between music and sport, such that a recent issue of a magazine about professional basketball represented itself in the form of a black soul music magazine (personal communication).

4 Conclusion

In sum, I hope to have made two points and suggested a third: First, sports-talk radio hosts use an intonational style characterized by phrases ending on pitches well above the speaker's baseline, which indexically evokes the special context of live sporting event, through iconic similarity to play-by-play broadcasts. Second, this indexicality refers to *liveness* as a trope of masculinity that mediates gendered notions of nation, class, and race. And third, that the popularity of these sports talk shows depends, in part, upon the same cultural dynamic that lends dynamism to the Men's Movement.

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