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## Resisting the Gender Binary: The Use of (ING) in the Construction of Non-binary Transgender Identities

### Abstract

This paper examines how speakers from a non-binary community of practice located in the Greater Toronto Area make variable use of (ING) in order to construct non-binary transgender identities while navigating spaces that they experience as safe or non-safe. I explore how two central members of this community exhibit stronger variant preferences in non-queer spaces, as opposed to queer spaces, in order to create stances of resistance to cis-normative gender ideologies and index their non-binary identities. For this group, non-safe-spaces often require a degree of conscious identity work in order to avoid being misgendered as their gender-assigned-at-birth, an insight that was reflected in their linguistic production. By drawing together meta-commentary and patterns in (ING) production, I show how the safeness of a space is constituted in part through the constraints placed on non-binary speakers' linguistic performances. This research provides a perspective on gender identity and its interaction with place by highlighting the importance of linguistic production in particular interactions.

# Resisting the Gender Binary: The Use of (ING) in the Construction of Non-binary Transgender Identities

Chantal Gratton\*

## 1 Introduction

Gender diversity and non-conformity has increasingly become an area of interest for researchers, fueling the development of post-structuralist models of gender identity that are no longer based on the presupposition of a gender binary. Butler's (1999, 2011) theory of performativity, for example, opened a space for the analysis of subversive gender identities, while Bucholtz and Hall (2005) outlined a sociolinguistic framework capable of analyzing such identities. Recently, some researchers, such as Papp (2011) and Zimman (2012, 2013), have conducted linguistic research on transgender speakers and identity creation. However, linguistic research on non-binary trans individuals is virtually non-existent.<sup>1</sup>

This article addresses this lacuna by examining the speech of non-binary trans individuals in order to ascertain how they use language to construct their gender identities. The focus of the present paper will be these speakers' variable use of (ING), a variable sometimes found to index gender identity, by presenting the results for two central members of a non-binary community of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992) located in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada. I will explore how these two speakers make variable use of (ING) to create stances of resistance to cis-normative gender ideologies, in order to index their non-binary transgender identities in two situationally distinct interactions.<sup>2</sup>

As one of the most widely studied sociolinguistic variables in the history of variationist analysis, previous studies of (ING) will provide an important backdrop to this study. This variable comprises two main variants: velar [ɪŋ], the standard variant (1a), and apical/alveolar [ɪn], the vernacular variant (1b).<sup>3</sup>

- (1) a. because I was scanning [skæniŋ] things, because these were all commissions  
b. I was getting [gɛtɪn] paid to draw these [03/002]<sup>4</sup>

Research has shown that the variability of (ING) is sensitive to both internal and external constraints, in the latter case factors such as social class, style, and gender. A tendency for female speakers to use more of the standard [ɪŋ] variant than male speakers is well documented (e.g. Hazen 2008, Tagliamonte 2004, Trudgill 1974). Various proposals have been put forward to account for such patterns. Eckert (2011), for example, argues that in "the standard language market," women are more marginalized than men and often viewed as "interlopers." One means by which they can accrue social capital, then, is through the use of standard variants (Eckert 2011:59–60).

Despite the association between (ING) and gender documented in the literature, it is crucial to remember that gender is not a homogenous category. Further, just as gender identity is highly variable, the linguistic variants used to express gender also vary. While this association may hold true for particular communities of cis-gender speakers, there remains the possibility that other groups

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<sup>1</sup>The umbrella term *trans* is used in this paper to refer to all individuals whose gender identity does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth, regardless of their adherence or in-adherence to the gender binary, or their position in relation to medical intervention.

<sup>2</sup>The term *cis* or *cisgender* denotes an individual whose gender identity is aligned with that which they were assigned at birth.

<sup>3</sup>There exist other variants (e.g., [ɪn] and [ɪŋk]) of (ING) that are not attested in my corpus.

<sup>4</sup>All examples are recorded verbatim. The references in parentheses refer to the speaker number and the interview number.

of female or male speakers may not use (ING) in quite the same way. For this reason, it is important to note that the (ING) variants themselves do not index femininity or masculinity; instead, they work together with other social and linguistic factors to create certain styles, registers, and stances.

Recent research on the indexical nature of the (ING) variable has arrived at the same conclusion: speakers make varied use of linguistic resources to construct different forms of gender identities by employing a greater or lesser amount of standard variants. Kiesling's (1998) analysis of (ING) variation in fraternity men's speech emphasized the importance of analyzing the discursive context in which the variable is embedded. He found that the variants did not in fact index masculinity per se, but instead produced different masculine stances. Similarly, Campbell-Kibler's (2007) examination of the effect of (ING) variation on listeners' perceptions of speaker identity found that increased use of the velar variant by a male speaker produced a perceived gay-sounding and less "masculine" style. In fact, listeners associated an increased use of [ɪŋ] with qualities such as gay, metrosexual, urban and "accented," findings which Campbell-Kibler suggests form a stereotypical gay accent that the listeners draw upon in perception tasks. In this way, (ING) variability can be used to create particular styles that relate to gender or sexuality.

These analyses of (ING) variation represent a shift in the sociolinguistic conceptualizations of identity which now take a more dynamic view of speaker identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, Coupland 2007). Identity, and gender identity in particular, is not something that exists pre-discursively but rather is something that individuals construct through linguistic and other kinds of semiotic practices. As Ochs (1992) argues, linguistic resources indirectly index abstract social categories or personae via particular stances within discourse. It is these stances that are directly indexed by sociolinguistic variables. The various social meanings that linguistic resources can convey constitute an indexical field of multiple potential social meanings, any of which can be drawn upon to create an individual's identity (Eckert 2008). The meanings associated with particular linguistic resources are not fixed, but instead are influenced by the particular discursive interactions in which they appear. Individuals create their identities by overlapping various linguistic resources and stylistic aspects to create social meaning and by bringing certain resources to the forefront in a given social interaction, they create locally and interactionally specific stances that are influenced by social and cultural norms (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

As we will see, the ways in which my two consultants make use of the (ING) variants in non-queer spaces, as compared to queer spaces, suggests that they distance themselves from their respective genders-assigned-at-birth by using the particular variant that, in this local context, indexes resistance to either cis-normative femininity or masculinity. The present research shows that this variable's indexical meaning of resistance to cis-normativity is brought forth by layering linguistic and non-linguistic resources in order to produce stances of resistance. We will see, however, that in the process of creating non-binary gender identities, they inevitably recreate a binary system.

## 2 Methodology

The data presented here come from a tight-knit group of non-binary trans individuals in the Greater Toronto Area. They can be characterized as a community of practice, as its members construct their gender identities through the interaction between language and other cultural symbolic systems, such as gestures, ways of acting, ways of talking, shared beliefs, common goals, etc. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). They associate with likeminded individuals who have experienced or are currently experiencing shared hardships and distress, and mainly interact with other group members. Some members have either been rejected by their birth families or their gender identities have been ignored, and they aim to provide each other with needed emotional support.

The larger project within which this research is set examines the linguistic practices of ten individuals within this community. This paper examines two relatively central figures, Flynn (assigned female at birth) and Casey (assigned male at birth). Both consultants are Caucasian native speakers of English, university students from middle-class families, have lived in the Greater Toronto Area for at least two years, have been living as non-binary individuals for at least one year, and are in their early twenties.

The consultants were audio-recorded in group sociolinguistic interviews, three of which form the basis of the analysis here (see Table 1 for interview information). Interview 1 and Interview 2

can be categorized as queer spaces, which include a consultant's home and a local cafe known for its gender-queer and queer-friendly staff and clientele. Interview 3 features a non-queer space, a popular cafe chain in a busy downtown area. Different friends were present in Interview 1 and Interview 2. The interviews were recorded with a single Zoom H2n portable digital recorder, placed between consultants.

	Consultants	Location	Length
Interview 1	Flynn, one friend	Home	1h 40min
Interview 2	Casey, two friends	Queer cafe	2h 16min
Interview 3	Flynn, Casey	Popular cafe	3h 01min

Table 1: Interview information.

A total of 6 hours and 57 minutes of speech were recorded. For each interview the first 15 minutes were not included in the analysis. From the remaining 6 hours and 12 minutes, all tokens of verbal (ING) variation were extracted from the relevant variable context: within polysyllabic words, word finally, in unstressed syllables. Grounds for exclusion included: proper names, expletives, repetitions, naturalization contexts (such as [ɪŋ] followed by [g]), incomprehensible speech, false starts and incomplete utterances, as well as type-tokens in excess of five per hour. The remaining tokens were coded for variant type (apical or velar); for interview location (home, queer cafe or popular café); and for speaker (Flynn or Casey). Though previous research has found that (ING) is sensitive to internal constraints, these are not examined in this study. This variable's sensitivity to external constraints other than gender are not examined as all social factors other than gender-assigned-at-birth are controlled for.

### 3 Results

A total of 275 tokens were extracted for the two consultants. Tables 2 and 3 present the results of the distributional analyses of (ING) variation across situations for each consultant, differentiating between queer spaces (Interview 1 and Interview 2) and non-queer spaces (Interview 3). We see that Flynn's use of (ING) across situations shows that they makes greater use of the [ɪn] variant than the [ɪŋ] variant in both the queer dominated situation (their home) and the non-queer situation (the popular cafe), shown in Table 2.<sup>5</sup> However, the rate at which they uses [ɪn] differs between situations, with a significant increase from 56% in the queer situation to 80% in the non-queer one ( $X^2 = 5.84$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .0157$ ). It is important to note that this shift from queer to non-queer spaces also marks a change from private to public ones.

Variants	Home		Popular cafe	
	N	%	N	%
[ɪŋ]	18	44	13	20
[ɪn]	23	56	52	80
Total N	41	100	65	100

Table 2: Distribution of (ING) variation according to situation for Flynn.

Similarly, the distributional results for Casey show that they makes greater use of the [ɪŋ] variant than the [ɪn] variant in both the queer situation (the queer cafe) and the non-queer situation (the popular cafe), but that the rate at which they uses [ɪŋ] increases in the latter, shown in Table 3. Here, their use of [ɪŋ] increases significantly from 58% in the queer situation to 89% in the non-queer one ( $\chi^2 = 19.07$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

<sup>5</sup>Both consultants prefer *they* used as a singular pronoun when another person is referring to them. I employ singular *they/them/their/themself*, with singular agreement, when referring to either consultant. Plural *they* with plural agreement is used when referring to both consultants.

Variants	Home		Popular cafe	
	N	%	N	%
[ɪŋ]	42	58	86	89
[ɪn]	30	42	11	11
Total N	72		97	

Table 3: Distribution of (ING) variation according to situation for Casey.

For both consultants, Interview 3 in the popular cafe yields quite different results from the other two interviews.<sup>6</sup> A look at the distributional results for this interview according to consultant, shown in Table 4, shows that both consultants employ their preferred variant at similarly high rates: 80% [ɪn] for Flynn and 89% [ɪŋ] for Casey. This variation between consultants (i.e., the fact that each prefers a different variant) is statistically significant and shows that they strongly favor one variant over the other in this non-queer public space ( $\chi^2 = 74.34$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

Variants	Flynn		Casey	
	N	%	N	%
[ɪŋ]	13	20	86	89
[ɪn]	52	80	11	11
Total N	65	100	97	100

Table 4: Distribution of (ING) variation according to consultant in the popular non-queer cafe.

The consultants' (ING) variation is captured in Figure 1, which shows how their linguistic habits diverge from a middle ground, where neither speaker truly favors either variant, towards either end of a [ɪn]–[ɪŋ] continuum, where both speakers strongly prefer opposing variants. These results suggest that some factor within each context influences the speech of these consultants, resulting in shared linguistic practices in queer-friendly spaces and a binary distinction in non-queer ones. (Recall that both speakers are of the same social class, ethnicity, community of practice and age cohort.) As will become apparent, these speakers employ (ING) differently across situations based on their perceived level of security in these spaces, and they utilize different variants in a process of *distinction*, in order to distance themselves from their respective gender-assigned-at-birth.

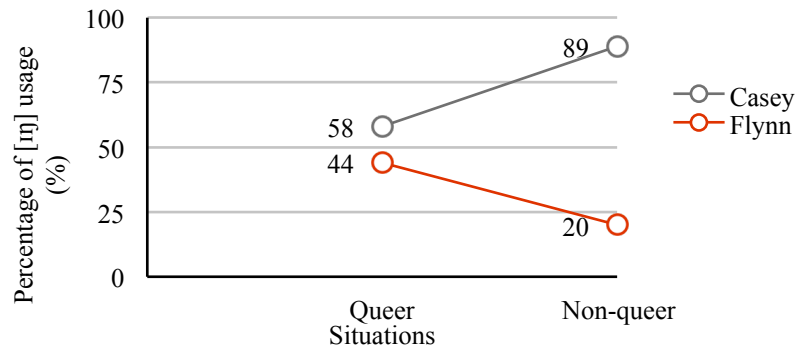


Figure 1: Distribution of [ɪŋ] usage by consultant and situation.

<sup>6</sup>The aggregated results for Interview 1 and Interview 2, Flynn and Casey's respective queer dominated situations, found that the variation between the two individuals was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 1.64$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .1998$ ; Fisher's exact test,  $p = .17$ ).

#### 4 Discussion

In order to understand the reasons behind the variation uncovered here, it is imperative to first consider how these individuals understand gender, as well as the ways in which they employ linguistic and non-linguistic resources in order to express their gender identities. Over the course of these three interviews, as well as in other interviews not reported on here, a substantial amount of meta-cultural and meta-linguistic data were gathered in which the consultants talked about their conscious efforts to create their gender identities. They discussed the techniques they used in “presenting” their gender or enacting their “gender presentation.” For example, Flynn detailed both cultural resources (types of clothing styles and ways of walking) and linguistics resources (vocal pitch and vocabulary) that set them apart from cis-females. Although pitch variation within this community is not analyzed in this paper, it is a major component of the larger project with this group of consultants, as the importance of vocal quality to gender identity is prevalent in the community, with discussions about changing one’s voice being commonplace. During Interview 3, Flynn describes a vocal exercise which they does constantly in their place of employment, seen in (2). This allows them to reach a lower pitch while in the workplace.

- (2) I’ll just do like (.) y’know (.) vocal exercises  
 like, you hum:: as low as you ca:n (.) bring- (.) life up your (.) hear and continue doing that,  
 and then it’ll just (.) stretches out the vocal cords<sup>7</sup> [01/002]

The creation of gender identities in any given situation comes about through the layering of these linguistic and non-linguistic resources (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). However, the use of each feature may vary from situation to situation, creating distributions such as that found in the (ING) variation above. My categorization of the situational contexts relates to some of the consultants’ metalinguistic commentary, in which they not only discussed conscious alteration of their vocal quality, but also situations in which they are aware of their gender presentation. For both Flynn and Casey, the situations that call for more conscious identity work are those in which they are around people with whom they feel uncomfortable, such as at work, in classes, with family, etc. One discussion, reproduced in (3), involves Casey’s conscious knowledge that when in a situation which is deemed uncomfortable they speaks with a “higher timbre” or “pitch.” This is opposed to situations in which they is comfortable, such as with friends, where they can be freer with their vocal pitch, even using a “deep manly” voice for comedic effect.

- (3) I typically (.) talk with a (.) higher timbre when I’m not around people that I’m comfortable with (.)  
 like, the timbre goes up, the pitch kind of goes up, and it- °sort of goes like a little more of a falsetto, it’s softer, it’s more accepting°  
 and then when I’m with friends it’s like \*euh::: gro::ss\*  
 ((laughter))  
 \*let’s talk in deep manly voice because that’s funnier::\*  
 ((laughter))  
 but yeah, no, the timbre and pitch definitely go up a lot when I’m like, not (.) with (.) people that I’m comfortable with [03/004]

This divide between comfortable and uncomfortable situations is not uncommon. As a marginalized community they are familiar with the concept of *safe-space*, which is used to define a space where marginalized groups can feel secure expressing themselves without being subject to mainstream norms and stereotypes, and are free from derogatory terms and hurtful comments. This kind of protection, however, is not offered in most public and private spaces, including campuses, workplaces, commercial establishments and even family homes. As these spaces cannot guarantee freedom from overt stigmatization and potential backlash, individuals may feel less comfortable expressing their non-normative identities when in them.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix for transcription conventions.

The individuals in this community believe that in queer environments, they can be read as non-normative quite easily, which means, according to them, that they do not need to consciously worry about their gender presentation. However, the same cannot be said for non-queer public contexts. They believe that individuals whom they encounter in non-queer public spaces will presuppose a binary gender based mainly on their physiological characteristics. In order to present a non-binary or non-normative gender identity, they must distance themselves from the gender which is presumed (their gender-assigned-at-birth) by utilizing resources which resist the gender norms associated with their respective gender-assigned-at-birth. For example, Flynn believes that individuals they encounter in public will presuppose that they is female based on their physical characteristics. In order for an individual in a public setting to second-guess this presupposition, Flynn feels that they is required to utilize resources which resist cis-female norms. To this end, they employs a lower pitch, makes greater use of expletives, takes up greater space in conversation etc. (resources that they associates with non-feminine styles) in non-queer public spaces. It is not that Flynn is employing linguistic and non-linguistic resources that they feels are stereotypical of cis-normative masculinity in order to adequate themselves with masculinity.<sup>8</sup> Instead, Flynn utilizes resources that they associates with cis-normative masculinity, and non-feminine styles, in order to distance themselves enough from cis-normative femininity that they is not mis-gendered as such.<sup>9</sup> The array of metalinguistic and meta-semiotic discussions elicited from this community, which occur throughout all interviews, no doubt indicates a heightened awareness of the performative nature of gender and identity as a whole. In general, the metalinguistic commentary produced by these two speakers is, arguably, an indication of these speakers' conscious use of cultural, and even linguistic, resources in constructing their gender identities, which proves to be a valuable asset for the discussion of their (ING) variation.

This situational differentiation noted by my consultants is reflected in their linguistic production. The quantitative results show that the consultants significantly alter their usage of (ING) between the two types of situations. Whereas they make similar use of both variants in queer-friendly situation, Flynn makes greater use of [ɪn] and Casey makes greater use of [ɪŋ] in non-queer public ones. This pattern, in light of the meta-commentary explored here, suggests that these speakers may be making variable use of (ING) across situations based on their perceived level of security in presenting their gender identities. In the non-queer public context, they employ a greater use of the variant which indexes resistance to their respective gender-assigned-at-birth. This type of variability across different situations is not uncommon in the field of language and identity, relating back to one of Bucholtz and Hall's (2005:592) main principles of identity creation, namely that of *positionality*. Following Bucholtz and Hall, identity is not simply a composite of macro-level demographic categories, but includes locally and ethnographically specific cultural positions, as well as temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles. This type of situational variation is also attested in works such as Podesva's (2007) case study in which one speaker's variable use of pitch and falsetto were used to construct his persona differently across different kinds of interactions. That speakers' identities are redefined and recreated based on stances that are relevant within each particular situation provides further understanding of the (ING) variation found here.

This situational differentiation fits squarely with the community's primary concern regarding gender presentation: to avoid being mis-gendered. All individuals in this community, at one moment or another, recounted narratives about being mis-gendered or dead-named,<sup>10</sup> and discussed at length the disruption it causes to their lives, as it is one of the strongest emotional triggers<sup>11</sup> shared across the community. One such event is narrated by Flynn, presented in (4). It began as a discussion of gender identity in the workplace, but became a narrative about a recent incident where they

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<sup>8</sup> See discussion of *adequation*, below.

<sup>9</sup> The verb *mis-gender* refers to the act of referring to someone using terminology which does not reflect their gender identity.

<sup>10</sup> The verb *dead-name* refers to the act of referring to someone who has changed their name by instead using the name they were given at birth.

<sup>11</sup> The term *trigger*, sometimes called a *trauma trigger*, refers to a word, phrase, or topic which causes someone to experience a strong emotional reaction and/or to recall a past traumatic event.



was mis-gendered both at work and then again when they returned to their parents' home, where they was living at the time.

- (4) I go to work (.) someone calls you "miss," I'm having a great day, that alone is enough to actually ruin my day  
 like, that happens, like I- that happened at the work the other day, it was like the last half-hour of my shift, I was !fine! (.) and then someone's like "excuse me miss" or "ma'am" or whatever she called me (0.3)  
 and (0.8) the rest of the shift I was just angry and I was li- almost in tears because like that alone was enough to set me off into this other (0.2) like (0.6) emotional area and it was just like, I was !fine! (.) like completely fine  
 and then I go home and hear the same thing  
 ...  
 it's like !that! is enough to trigger me right now [01/002]

It is important to note that the triggering nature of mis-gendering is restricted to being mis-gendered as their gender-assigned-at-birth. Though they aren't content with being mis-gendered as the binary opposite of their gender-assigned-at-birth, it is not as emotionally or mentally harmful. This fear is so strong that the consultants talked about actively attempting to distance themselves from it by adopting enough stereotypically gendered tendencies to mark them as non-normatively gendered. In Interview 3, both Flynn and Casey had a long discussion regarding their conscious use of semiotic resources in the presentation of their gender identities. One point in this discussion, seen in (5), centered on Flynn's conscious attempt to distance herself from their gender-assigned-at-birth by using cultural and linguistic resources which they considers to be stereotypical of cis-normative masculinity, such as broad shoulders, "masculine" walk, use of expletives, and lower pitch.

- (5) I- I think I was overcompensating b- t- further distance myself (.) from the perception of me being (1.0) y'know (0.2) female or (0.4) whatever, uh: (2.0)  
 yeah (.) 'cause it's just !anything but that! [01/002]

In order to understand how these consultants' use of stereotypically cis-normative resources can lead to the creation of a non-binary identity, we must recall their perspective on gender presentation. In short, these speakers do not adequate themselves with cis-normative femininity or masculinity by employing resources that they associate with non-masculine or non-feminine styles; instead they may employ them in order to distance themselves enough from cis-normative gender identities to perform a non-binary identity.

Flynn's comments here provide evidence for my claim that in non-queer public situations the consultants create their gender identities by distancing themselves from the gender they were assigned at birth. This type of identity creation allows speakers to create identities by positioning themselves as similar to other social categories (*adequation*) or different from other social categories (*distinction*). Distinction allows speakers to create their identities by employing stances of resistance from locally and globally available personae and identities, thus marking themselves as distinct and different from them. Such use of distinction has been attested in other trans communities. For instance, Zimman's (2012:180) longitudinal study on the effects of masculinizing hormone therapy on the voices of transmasculine individuals pointed to tension in the community regarding how to position oneself in relation to cis-normative masculinity, with some speakers adequating with cis-men and others distinguishing themselves from them.

This process of distinction is reflected in the use of the (ING) variable found in this project. Flynn's use of the [ɪn] variant in the non-queer situation serves to create a stance of resistance towards cis-normative femininity, allowing them to create a gender identity that is different from a locally relevant ideology. This process of distinction serves to distance Flynn from a symbolic construct of femininity, which need not correlate with actual production by female speakers. Similarly, Casey's use of [ɪŋ] in the non-queer public situation indexes a stance of resistance towards cis-normative masculinity. These stance of resistance enable speakers to index away from a given social category, here female and male, instead of indexing towards a social category, as is general-

ly the case. Through this process of distinction, the speakers are able to employ resources which index their resistance to cis-normative gender identities in order to suppress similarities with the gender they were designated at birth and, in doing so, they are able to position themselves as different from cis-normative genders.

In the case of non-queer spaces, many of the individuals with which Flynn and Casey interact may have different gender ideologies and may harbor presuppositions regarding their gender identities that would not be encountered within their non-binary community. Acting with the knowledge that larger ideological processes affect public situations, these individuals vary their linguistic and cultural output in order to stake strong enough claims to their gender identities, in the hopes of avoiding being mis-gendered. It is seemingly unavoidable that the process with which they accomplish this goal inevitably leads to the recreation of a binary system. As we have seen, in order to create an identity one has to position oneself in relation to other available, locally relevant identities. In the creation of gender identities, speakers must always position themselves in relation to those which are available to listeners, in this case: male and female. Thus, non-binary individuals must position themselves in relation to these normative genders in order for listeners to comprehend their non-binary gender presentations.

## 5 Conclusion

What remains to be understood is the indexical meaning which the speakers assign to the (ING) variable. Knowing that these speakers employ (ING) variants differently across situations based on the relative security of the spaces and that they utilize different variants in a process of distinction, it would seem that the indexical meanings of each variant is intricately linked to non-binary gender identities in quite a binary manner. In public settings, where the consultants feel less secure presenting their gender identities, there is different indexical work happening with the (ING) variable than in queer settings. The difficulty with interpreting [ɪŋ] as indexical of resistance to cis-normative masculinity and also [ɪn] as indexical of resistance to cis-normative femininity is that such an interpretation could paint these variants as simply indexical of these binary genders. However, I reject this over-simplification, as linguistic variables do not index macro-social categories, but instead index locally relevant stances and styles.

We know that the (ING) variable can be sensitive to not only gender, but also various other social factors, resulting in a number of potential social indexes, as discussed above. It is important to understand this community and their practices in order to evaluate the indexical nature of (ING) in this particular context. Having controlled for other potential constraints on (ING) variation and provided evidence for a solid understanding of the community and these consultants' stances towards gender ideologies and social norms, I suggest that the variation attested does indeed constitute a layer in these speaker's gender identity creation, which interacts with other semiotic resources in order to produce stances of resistance to cis-normative femininity and masculinity.

We have seen, then, that these consultants utilize particular variants in order to index this resistance in particular environments. Within safe-spaces, neither Flynn nor Casey need to utilize significantly more of either variant, as they do not need to index resistance to norms of femininity or masculinity, respectively, in order to present their gender identities. This is because the fear of being mis-gendered in safe-spaces is nearly non-existent, as others present will not presuppose a gender identity based on physiological characteristics, outwards appearances, mannerisms, etc. However, in non-queer public spaces both consultants are subject to these types of presumptions. The only way to counter the general public's presuppositions is to employ resources that they would not attribute to the binary gender that they have presupposed. Again using Flynn as an example, if individuals presupposed a female gender, the only way to counter this presumption is to utilize resources that they would not associate with female individuals, such as using a lower vocal pitch or the broadening of shoulders. In this way, these consultants make significantly more use of either [ɪn] or [ɪŋ] in order to index resistance to cis-femininity or cis-masculinity. Layering these stereotypical resources, such as [ɪn] and broad shoulders, with the presupposed binary gender, such as female, allows these consultants to present their non-binary gender identities, with the goal of avoiding being mis-gendered.

Despite their desire to create a non-binary system, these individuals inevitably re-establish a

binary within their community by utilizing variants which oppose their respective genders-assigned-at-birth. This is unavoidable, as the gender binary is so firmly ingrained in society that they have no choice but to somehow reflect it in their gender creation. It is impossible to create a gender identity without positioning oneself in relation to other available identities; in this case the creation of a non-binary identity must be positioned in relation to binary ones. Despite this fact, these individuals make strong claims to their identity through the use of multiple semiotic systems. The resources which they draw upon differ between interactions, but in the end allow them to alter their stances towards cis-normative gender ideologies, depending on those present in a given situation.

As research on the linguistic practices of non-binary trans individuals is nearly non-existent, a great deal of work remains to be done. This research has provided a starting point for further analysis of non-binary speakers and communities, as well as provided some insight into non-normative identity creation. Future work should attempt to fill these gaps, as well as develop a finer understanding of the particular uses of linguistic resources within these communities. This will serve as a platform for the continued analysis of the ways in which non-binary trans individuals make use of linguistic resources in order to construct their gender identities. This is not only beneficial for research on non-normative speakers, but it can also shed light on binary gender identities and the gender binary itself.

## Appendix: Transcription Conventions

### I. Temporal and Sequential Relationships

- (0.5) Silences are indicated as pauses in tenths of a second  
 (.) Hearable micro-pause (less than two tenths of a second)

### II. Characteristics of Speech Delivery

- , Continuing intonation  
 : Lengthening of preceding sound (the more colons, the longer the sound)  
 ye- Abrupt cutoff sound (glottal stop)  
 !yes! Stress or emphasis (increased amplitude or pitch)  
 °yes° Noticeably softer and higher pitched  
 \*yes\* Stylized character voice of a lower pitch

### III. Other Notional Devices

- ((laughter)) Transcriber's description of events

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