A GAY/STRAIGHT COMPARISON OF GAY VOICES

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Introduction:

This study compares 4 gay male comedians and 4 straight male comedians’ performances of “gay speech”. The researcher observed comedians who were performing gay characters for the following three variables: the lisp ([s̪] instead of [s]), a raised pitch, and formal [–iŋ] vs. informal [–in] endings. It was hypothesized that both straight comedians and gay comedians would manipulate their [s] production to the dental [s̪] when performing a gay character; moreover, the comedians would also raise their pitch during their performance. The [–iŋ] vs. [–in] sounds, because their production below the level of consciousness, would not vary in the homosexual or heterosexual comedians. The purpose of this comparison was to determine how salient the features were in each group in order to identify stereotypical features associated with gay speech. In other words, if all of the comedians were using a particular feature, one could postulate that this feature has a stronger association with perceived gay speakers. Conversely, if the comedians were not using a particular feature, one could postulate that this feature has a weaker association or is not associated at all with perceived gay speakers.

In recent studies, participants were asked to rate speakers on a scale of homosexual to heterosexual and a scale of feminine to masculine. In these studies, the data showed that features like the lisp ([s̪] instead of [s]), received higher gay ratings; participants rated speakers’ sexuality as gay more often when they exhibited this feature (Mack & Munson, 2012). Pitch was also associated with gay speech. Though higher pitch has not yielded conclusive results with regards to gay ratings (Gaudio, 1994; Smyth, Jacobs, & Rogers, 2003), it is worth considering because researchers originally theorized that pitch was a cue listeners used to judge a person's sexuality (Lakoff, 1973 & 1990; McConnel-Ginet, 1978). Finally, a study involving ratings of [–in] vs. [–
[ŋ] has shown that the more formal [–ɪŋ] has been rated gayer than the less formal [–ɪn] (Campbell-Kibler, 2007).

I observed a total of 8 male comedians portraying a gay voice (N=8). The ages were not a factor as the ages could not always be determined but roughly ranged from 20-34. I made predictions about the relative ages of the comedians whose age was not listed in their biographies. Half of the sample was homosexual (n=4) and half was heterosexual (n=4). The acts have been performed within the past five years. This better reflects the current attitudes and beliefs about what stereotypical features are associated with gay speech.

The acts were downloaded from Youtube.com and Comedycentral.com. The sound files were then placed into the speech analyzing software, Praat. The gay presentations were examined for moments of lisping (using the [ʒ] sound), frequency change (i.e. higher pitch), and the relative use of [–ɪŋ] vs. [–ɪn]. Samples of the comedians’ natural and performed speech were analyzed using Praat. In order to measure a pitch change, the frequency of the comedians’ speech was measured in the comedians' natural voice and during the presentation of the gay voice. The difference of that pitch was determined. I impressionistically determined whether the comedians were using the [s] or [ʒ] sounds, and in cases where I could not confidently make a judgment, a final decision was made using a spectrographic analysis in Praat. Finally, the –ɪn/–ɪŋ comparison required that I find the instantiations of [–ɪn] vs. [–ɪŋ] in natural speech and compare that to the instantiations during the presentation of gay speech. These differences were measured for all the comedians, and then, it was determined whether there were an equal number of gay comedians and straight comedians presenting the stereotypical gay voice.
Objectives and Hypotheses:

This study is an application of Queer Linguistics. Because Queer Linguistics is a relatively new field, it is important to establish what the aims of such a subfield are. Motchsenbacher introduces Queer Linguistics in his book, *Language Gender and Sexuality: Post-structuralist Perspectives*: "Working from a Queer Linguistic perspective entails critically scrutinizing manifestation of gender binarism and heteronormativity in language...This is not tantamount to abolishing gendered and sexual macro-categories altogether...On the other hand, accepting these categories wholeheartedly without critical reflection and without paying attention to their discursive history seems to be just as inadequate." (Motschenbacher, 2010, p. 180). In other words, Queer Linguistics is an attempt at understanding dominant language use (the norms of language) and contrasting it with language use that breaks the norm. It does not, as Motschenbacher points out, attempt to completely eradicate current societal binary categories. Instead, it aims to critically evaluate language use in society.

It is also important to know that Queer Linguistics is not the study of "gay language". Paul Baker is clear on this point: "More recent perspectives of language and identity recognise that there is no such thing as a form of language that is uniquely and universally gay...Instead, language use is specific to time and place, and identities such as gay man or woman are not cast in stone" (Baker, 2008, p. 54). Language and identity is complicated, and it is a simplistic view to suggest that all gay men speak the same. Instead, it is important to know that evidence or projection of identity requires an investigation of many facets; i.e. gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.

Based on the precepts of Queer Linguists, this study in no way attempts to say that the features under investigation (i.e. the lisp, high pitch, and formality of [–iŋ] endings) are actual
features of gay men's speech. Instead, it attempts to identify potential stereotypes that exist and are contemporarily used for comedic purposes and to what extent these stereotypes may be present in both heterosexual and homosexual communities. Because comedians are attempting to exploit what their listeners find humorous, it can be understood that the comedians are reflecting stereotypes that their audience will recognize. Essentially, a comedian is not going to try and perform a voice for comedic purposes that their audience will not understand. For example, if a comedian performs a gay voice but the features they exploit are not recognizable to the audience members' expectations, then the joke could potentially fail. This means that stand-up comedy can provide linguists with interesting information that potentially reflects what a culture might believe linguistically about a particular group of people.

Much of the research on language perception and sexuality has focused on determining what listeners think, with regards to a person's sexuality, when they hear a person speak. The participants have been asked to listen to speech samples, which have generally been manufactured to manipulate a particular variable, and rate the speaker on a scale from gay to straight. What has been done on gay speech production has been focused on scripted speech and laboratory settings. Though such experiments can be illuminating, they do not examine naturally occurring speech, which is ideal data because it will tell researchers what speakers are actually doing. In the laboratory settings, speakers may perform based on how they feel you want them to perform.

Stand-up comedy provides an opportunity to blend both methods. While comedians in general have their show scripted and memorized, there is always some variation due to audience participation or the fact that the shows are usually relaxed, which may create an environment where the comedian will improvise and that allows for a more natural-like setting. As stated
previously, natural speech is preferred because, as linguistic researchers, we want to know what speakers are actually doing instead of what people think we want to hear. In other words, performed speech does not always reflect reality.

In order to add to the Queer linguistic literature, this study has two main objectives:

1. Compare and contrast US and Canadian gay and straight Caucasian male comedians who are performing “gay voices”
2. Determine the extent to which these features may be stereotypical in US and Canadian Caucasian male stand-up comedy.

With regards to the three features, I hypothesize that:

1. A raised pitch will be a salient feature in both groups (homosexual and heterosexual)
2. The lisp will be a salient feature in both groups (homosexual and heterosexual)
3. [ɪŋ] will not be a salient feature in either group (homosexual and heterosexual)

It seems that a lot of previous literature has started with the assumption that gay men are stereotypically thought to have a higher pitch and a lisp, so it seems reasonable to assume that comedians will play with these two features for comedic result. However, [ɪŋ] or [ɪŋ] production is below the level of consciousness, so I do not feel that comedians will manipulate this feature when performing gay voices.

**Review of the Literature:**

Stand-up routines have been the subject of pragmatic linguistic analyses for quite some time; however, gay humor research on stand-up routines is still relatively new. Nardi (2008) carried out one such study. In this study, stand-up routines from the 50s, 60s, and 70s were used to examine stereotypical joke archetypes of gay men. Nardi discovered that gay men were often feminized in gay-related stand-up jokes (2008). This study, of course, is pragmatic in nature and
only focuses on jokes 1950-1979. Research on current stand-up routines would be necessary to see how these jokes have changed.

As far as recent studies on gay humor are concerned, some researchers have looked at gay characters in sitcoms. Cooper (2003) and Linneman (2008) both examine the show, Will & Grace. Cooper looks at the character, Jack, and the audience's reception of him; the participants have: "...the tendency to view Jack through the lens of dominant cultural stereotypes" (2003, p. 529). Cooper's analysis is more of a sociological analysis asking participants to answer various questions about the characters. Linneman (2008) also takes this approach; however, he focuses mostly on Will Truman, the title character, and how the other characters interact with him. Linneman discovers that the other characters have a tendency to feminize Will (2008).

Comedy has also been analyzed to make conclusions about the portrayal of race. Bucholtz and Lopez (2011) examined the "wigger" (white nigger) characters in films from the 1990s. They are examining the films for moments where European American actors are using features of African American English. Some of the features they look for include: zero copula, third person singular verb form regularization, postvocalic /r/ deletion, post-vocalic /l/ deletion, and much more (Bucholtz & Lopez, 2011, pp. 687-688). They conclude: "In this article, we have argued that cross-racial representations of AAE in Hollywood films largely reproduce entrenched ideologies of language, race, and gender through the practice of linguistic minstrelsy..." (Bucholtz & Lopez, 2011, p. 701). This study highlights the importance and practicality of examining popular representations of certain types of characters for stereotypical phonological and grammatical features.

Bucholtz (2011) takes a look at narratives in a racially divided high school to demonstrate the necessity of examining race talk not only for its content but also for its discursive structure,
its ethnographic and interactional context, its construction by the researcher and its ideological effects (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 285). Again, such a study highlights the importance of examining how identity is portrayed in one's speech.

Several studies have looked at gender as it relates to comedy. Most of these studies have been pragmatic in nature. Davies (2006) writes about the differences gender may or may not have on one's sense of humor. Kotthoff (2006) examines feminist humor.

Humor has not been a commonly used genre for phonological analysis; however, it does appear to be useful when exploring stereotypes that may or may not exist in the social discourse. With this study, the idea is to see how comedians are mimicking gay speech; however, mimic is not the best term because, as discussed, gay men do not all speak the same. However, the comedians are, essentially, mimicking an idea of a certain type of speech. In other words, they are projecting stereotypes that exist about gay men. For that reason, this mimicking phenomenon will be referred to as a 'presentation of gay speech.' This phrase better highlights what is happening. The performers are providing a rendition of some community’s speech, though that community does not have an actual 'dialect.' This study looks for three stereotypical phonological features that are believed to be features in gay speech. Those features are: the lisp, raising pitch, and a preference for formal –in over the less formal –in. A detailed explanation for the motivation of these features will be provided.

**Why the Lisp?**

Van Borsel et. al. (2009) examined the prevalence of the lisp in homosexual men, heterosexual women, and heterosexual men. All of the participants were asked to read a passage from "the north wind and the sun..." from the International Phonetic Association (1974), and the researchers independently judged whether the participants exhibited the lips or not. The
methodology may not be the most sound because perception can be relative; however, the researchers attempted to control for this by comparing their individual judgments, and when a disagreement existed, the recordings were played over and over again until the judges could reach a consensus (Van Borsel et. al., 2009, p. 102). The researchers concluded that the lisp was more prevalent in gay men than in heterosexual men and women, and the prevalence of lisping in gay men is higher in young adults (p. 103).

The lisp does appear to have some prevalence in the gay community. It is also a commonly held that gay men project their gay identity through the lisp (Munson & Zimmerman, 2006).

Why pitch?

Higher pitch has often been associated with gay speech because the assumption has been that gay men speak like women. Lakoff (1973) sets out to describe women's language as it compares to that of men's language. The claims are highly suspect because her data collection is unorthodox. She writes: "The data on which I am basing my claims have been gathered mainly by introspection: I have examined my own speech and that of my acquaintances, and have used my own intuition in analyzing it. I have also made use of the media" (Lakoff, 1973, p. 46). It should be noted, however, that this was one of the first attempts to explore language as it relates to gender, and the field of gender studies and sexuality studies owes much to Lakoff's work as she helped to establish a field in which researchers can examine questions of gender and language and sexuality and language.

In this work, Lakoff also makes some rash comments about gay men and women. She writes: "It is of interest, by the way, to note that men's language is increasingly being used by women, but women's language is not being adopted by men, apart from those who reject the
American masculine image (e.g. homosexual)" (Lakoff, 1973, p. 50). It would sound as if Lakoff was suggesting that gay men spoke like women, which is not unheard of but has not been shown with consistency in linguistic studies. However, people still espouse this idea though linguists are showing more and more how unfounded this idea is.

McConnell-Ginet also highlights this idea that gay men will speak like women. She writes about the intonation of women's speech as it relates to the power struggle between men and women. She proposes two theories for why men might use the female intonation contours: "we can hypothesize that certain intonation contours are stigmatized markers of "feminine" speech, indicating in male usage either overt flaunting of the code for sex-appropriate behavior (presenting oneself as "gay," for example) or a derogatory imitation of women" (McConnell, 1978, p. 550). Though this is not quite as implied of a connection as we find in Lakoff (1973), McConnell-Ginet is explicating this connection with gay pitch to "gay men's speech" and "women's speech."

Smyth, Jacobs, and Rogers (2003) took the idea that gay speakers have a higher average frequency ($F_0$) and attempted to determine if listeners use this as a cue for determining a speaker's sexuality. In order to test this, the researchers gathered 75 speech samples and measured their pitch ($F_0$), and the samples were played for participants who were asked to rate gay or straight and masculine or feminine (Smyth, Jacobs, & Rogers, 2003, p. 342). Ultimately, the conclusions is that pitch is not a main factor for gay ratings (p. 344). This does not, however, suggest that pitch is not a factor at all when listeners are making a determination about a speaker's sexuality. But, it does suggest that the issue is much more complicated than just one feature; i.e. pitch.
Podesva (2007) analyzes pitch as well; however, he looks at the falsetto, or raised pitch, as a stylized feature to project one's sexuality. In order to do this, Podesva had a participant record his speech in various settings, and Podesva identifies moments when the falsetto was used: "Falsetto was identified on a perceptual, rather than acoustic, basis because no one acoustic correlate of falsetto can adequately differentiate between falsetto and modal voice" (2007, p. 483). Podesva concludes that the falsetto may be used to project a gay identity as evidenced by a scenario in which the participant is interacting with gay friends at a barbeque (2007, pp. 496-497). Though this only involves one participant, it is still interesting to note that the falsetto seemed particularly salient in moments where a gay identity may be more welcome, in this case among fellow gay peers.

Perhaps, Cartei and Reby (2011) carried out the most relevant analysis to this study's analysis of pitch. In their study, Cartei and Reby analyzed heterosexual actors portraying gay characters on television shows (2011, p. 81). The samples were all ran through Praat using a custom script, which: "allows the experimenter to set all analysis parameters prior to processing, and to modify them manually if necessary (blind to sample and condition), to correct for tracking errors" (Cartei & Reby, 2011, p. 82). Ultimately, the study concludes that the heterosexual actors did, indeed, employ a higher pitch when playing a gay character (Cartei & Reby, 2011, p. 85). Cartei and Reby present a really important notion that, at least in heterosexual actors, the tendency is to raise one's pitch when playing a homosexual character. This study does not, then, see how that may or may not be present in homosexual actors too.

Why [–i̯ŋ] v [–ɪn]?

Perhaps one of the leading researchers in the examination of [–i̯ŋ] vs. [–ɪn] is Kathryn Campbell-Kibler. In 2007, Campbell-Kibler carried out a study that examined listener perception
of speech and sexuality. In this study, she first realizes the impact – iŋ can have on increasing the rate at which listeners rate speakers as gay. She found that listeners were more likely to rate a particular speaker, Jason, as gay when he used the more formal [–iŋ] than the less formal [–in] (Campbell-Kibler, 2007, pp. 52-53). However, these results were inconclusive as it was not necessarily a phenomenon that appeared with ratings of other speakers.

The results from her 2007 study led Campbell-Kibler to examine this feature further and in conjunction with other features, namely: pitch and /s/ fronting (2011, p. 56). Recordings were manipulated to create variations in the three features ([s] production, [–iŋ] production, and a raised pitch). In the first phase, Campbell-Kibler was testing the legitimacy of the recordings. In other words, did the listeners believe that the recordings were natural? This was paramount; if the participants noticed the recordings sounded manipulated, the legitimacy of this study would be called into question. In the second phase, 175 participants were asked to rate the speakers on nine different scales judging a variety of traits including: intelligence, friendliness, sexuality, etc. (Campbell-Kibler, 2011, pp. 56-57). Ultimately, she discovers that – iŋ was not associated with sexuality; however, /s/ fronting and – iŋ together greatly increased the chance that a speaker would be rated as an effeminate gay man (Campbell-Kibler, 2011, pp. 63-64). This study ultimately highlights how complicated perception of one's sexual identity based on speech can actually be.

**Method**

Eight Caucasian male comedians' performances were analyzed. Four of the eight were men who identify as homosexual, and four were men who identify as heterosexual. In order to control for current social attitudes about sexuality, the sample was limited to acts that were posted online within the last 5 years; this helped to ensure that the material is still relevant to
members of contemporary American society. In order to keep sexual orientation as the only variable between the groups, the comedians were limited to Caucasian individuals who were all in their 20s or 30s. Perhaps, in a later study, race could be an added independent variable. Each act also needed to contain a performed gay speech act. This was determined by the speaker introducing a gay character explicitly or commenting on how gay the voice sounded. For example, John Mulaney introduces his gay voice by saying, "When I was a little boy, I was more like a 67 year old gay man that's kind of over it sexually, you know? I was just like an old queen. I would go out to the recess yard and be like, [begins gay voice]" (Comedy Central, 2012). Or, the characters being performed can be assumed to be gay by context clues. For example, Rob Gleeson talks about how he was at a gay bar as a newly out-of-the-closet man, and these guys came up to him to invite him into the bathroom to do drugs (EntertainmentWeekly, 2013). He then begins to perform their parts. It can be assumed that the men were gay because they are also in a gay bar. That is not to say that all men in gay bars are gay, however, assuming the characters are homosexual is not a stretch. As stated previously, the comedians' performance of gay speech was analyzed for a change in pitch, the use of the lisp, and the comedians' use of the more formal [–in] form or the less formal [–in] form.

The Comedians:

The comedians were all picked based on their race (i.e. Caucasian) and the date of their performance being posted on the internet. The performance must have been posted within the last five years. This means that the oldest the videos could have been posted in 2010. The videos also needed to have a large enough sample of performed gay speech. Some comedians that were initially considered only had a few words uttered in what they were calling their gay voice. This does not allow for a full analysis. I would not have been able to analyze all three features. Also,
the videos needed to have natural speech samples before the performed speech or directly after
that was free from excessive audience interruptions like applause and loud laughter. In one case,
data had to be pulled from two separate videos because the comedian posted the videos
separately; however, it was pointed out that the two comedic bits typically follow each other.
The samples range from 10 seconds to 39 seconds with an average length of 17.75 seconds (See
detailed breakdown in Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comedians</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Performed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt Taylor</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Dees</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Mulaney</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris D'Elia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Gleeson</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Morris</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Sank</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Adomian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Heterosexual Comedians:

**Matt Taylor:**

Matt Taylor's performance was filmed on the Comedy Time stage in 2010. Comedy Time
is a company that produces a lot of comedic sketches and attempts to reach a broad audience by
including categories on their website like; Latino, Chick, and Urban comedy (Comedy Time,
2012). Taylor's age could not be determined; however, I would guess that he is in his 30s. His
prominence in the Los Angeles community is apparent: "Matt Taylor is the owner of MT
Productions - the largest live event comedy producer in Los Angeles with shows at the Comedy
Store, Hollywood Improv, Ice House, HAHA Cafe Comedy Club, Mad House Comedy Club,
Comedy Palace, and many more" (The Comedy Store, 2015).
The bit in which Taylor's performed voice can be found is explicitly mentioning the gay voice. He is talking about how he loves his gay friends because they get to use the gay voice. He does admit that there could be a problem with calling the police with the gay voice, which sets up the largest portion of his performed speech. The natural voice is in a bit about how he lives in Korean Town, and he doesn't know where he is going.

*Chris D'Elia*

Chris D'Elia's data is found in his Comedy Central special, "Chris D'Elia: White Male Black Comic," which was posted to Comedy Central's website in 2013 and filmed in New Orleans (Comedy Central, 2013). Chris D'Elia is 34 years old, and he is originally from New Jersey ("Chris D'Elia", 2015).

D'Elia's performed voice comes from a portion of his stand-up where he talks about his friend coming out to him. His natural voice sample comes from his judgment of people who do not like homosexuals.

*John Mulaney:*

John Mulaney is a 32-year-old comedian from Chicago, Illinois ("John Mulaney", 2015). His performance was posted to Comedy Central's website in 2012 (Comedy Central, 2015). "New in Town" was performed in New York, New York (IMDb, 2015).

The performed sample from Mulaney's performance is from a bit where he discusses how he was an "old queen" as a child. His natural voice comes from him setting up the performed voice. He is discussing how it's strange that he has a girlfriend because he is probably gay.

*Seth Dees:*
Seth Dees has relatively little information available about him on the internet. His twitter account says that he is from Arkansas (Dees, 2015). His performance is in Little Rock, Arkansas. He appears to be in his 20s.

Dees's performed voice is not explicitly introduced as a gay voice or character; however, there are several moments where he comments on how gay it sounds. He is performing two individuals who have the same voice, and they are having a discussion about a picture of a cat one of them posted on Facebook. There are a couple of comments that make it clear that Dees believes this to be a stereotypical gay voice: 1. He posted the video himself, and he posts it saying: "I also like doing a slightly homo-erotic voice at the Loony Bin in Little Rock to make the bible-belters feel uncomfortable" (Dees, 2010). 2. There is a separate video in which others have commented that it follows the Google Cat bit, and Dees comments on how gay the voice sounded in that video (Dees, 2010). His natural voice is found when he setting up the Google Cats bit; he is talking about how Facebook allows us to share material other people created to express individuality.

**The Homosexual Comedians**

*Rob Gleeson*

Rob Gleeson's performance was posted by a company called Laugh Factory in 2013. Laugh Factory has clubs in Chicago, Hollywood, Las Vegas, Long Beach, and San Manuel (Laugh Factory, 2015). It is not clear which club Gleeson is performing at. Gleeson's age is not available online, but I would describe him as being in his late 20s or early 30s. He has performed on Conan.

Gleeson's performed voice is in a bit where he talks about his first experience in a gay bar as a newly out man. His natural voice is pulled from the set-up to the gay bar bit.
Ted Morris

Ted Morris is a Canadian comedian (Morris, 2011). He appears to be in his 30s. The focus of this study is North American comedians; however, finding white gay male comedians performing gay voices is somewhat challenging. For that reason, Morris is the only Canadian comedian in the sample. This may be problematic in the overall analysis; however, Canadian culture is similar to that of the US, so the data may not be entirely problematic. Morris's performance was recorded and posted by Comedy Now in 2012. Comedy Now is a Canadian comedy show (Bell Media, 2015).

The performed sample comes from a bit where he talks about how the placement of an earring used to mean that you sold drugs and later transitioned to mean the wearer was gay. He says that this had to have led to awkward discussions in the middle of that transition. Someone would be looking for drugs, but the man wearing the earring would be looking for a man. The natural voice comes from Morris's description of the difficulty in finding other gay men in the winter.

James Adomian

James Adomian's performance comes from his album Low Hangin Fruit, which was released in 2012 (Earwolf, 2015). It is unclear where this was recorded. He has performed on the Last Comic Standing show, and he also guest starred in Children's Hospital, a popular show on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim (Earwolf, 2015). Adomian appears to be in his 30s.

The performed sample is from a bit that Adomian often performs about gay villains. Adomian is discussing how Hollywood is obsessed with the gay villain, and he goes through several popular villains. The sample for this data specifically deals with Transformers, robots that can change between giant humanoid battle machines and various types of manmade
vehicles, and a man talking to his manservant Raul. The natural data comes from him talking about how Hollywood has the gay villain archetype.

*Adam Sank*

Adam Sank is a comedian from New York. He has performed all over the country, and like Adomian, he was on *the Last Comic Standing* (Sank, 2015). His performance was posted by a comedy channel on YouTube called Stand-up Bits in 2013. It's unclear where this performance was recorded. Sank appears to be in his 30s.

Sank's performed data comes from him imitating a gay friend of his. He is using this to tell other gay men to stop speaking like black women. His natural data comes from him talking about his favorite Showtime show, *The Tudors*.

Once the videos were collected, the audio was pulled out of the video and edited in Garageband, an audio editing software found on Mac computers. The editing involved cutting out the portions of performed speech and splicing them together. Some of the comedians switched between their natural voice and the performed voice. In order to create one analyzable file, these performed moments were each cut out of the whole routine and put together to create one fluid audio file. The natural speech sample was pulled from a constant stream of unperformed speech either before or after the performed speech act. The natural samples and performed samples for each comedian are roughly the same length (in seconds). Also, the applause, laughter, and other various sounds from the audience were kept to a minimum. It is also unfortunate that more data could not be collected. The samples are rather short, which does not allow for strong generalizations about the data.
**Measuring Pitch**

Previous studies that have analyzed pitch ($F_0$) have employed a couple of different methods. Before the invention of Praat, Gaudio (1994) used an autocorrelation pitch tracker to determine if gay men did in fact have a higher average $F_0$.

However, since more recent studies (Podesva, 2007; Cartei & Reby, 2012) have used Praat to measure $F_0$, this study employed Praat for its frequency analysis. The performances were spliced off of Youtube.com or Comedycentral.com using a website that converts the video to an mp3. This audio was uploaded to GarageBand, a Mac-based audio editor, and the gay speech acts were cut out of the bigger file. In cases where the comedian switched back and forth, I cut out the natural voice and created a file that only contains the moments of performed gay speech. Then, a sample of natural speech that was roughly the same length (in seconds) as the performed speech was cut out of the larger performance. These samples were generally extracted from the discussion leading into or directly following the performed speech act. In the case of Seth Dees's performance, the natural speech had to be taken from a separate video that is known to have followed the gay voice joke. The variation of where the natural speech sample was pulled from is due to audience applause or laughter. The section (before or after) the performed speech with the least amount of audience noise was selected. Even though every possible step was taken to keep the audience's sounds out of the samples, this was not always avoidable. However, the extra noise was minimal and only happens in a few cases.

In order to obtain the $F_0$, the clips of the natural speech and the performed gay speech were analyzed in Praat. The frequency is easily obtained in the program by highlighting the whole section and clicking "get pitch". A new window appears that contains the mean frequency in Hertz. This was noted in a spreadsheet for all 16 samples.
Measuring the Lisp:

Mack and Munson (2012) describe the lisp as being potentially different from /s/ in two different ways: 1. /s/ vs. /θ/ 2. hyperarticulated /s/. The first potential difference is pretty self-explanatory; /s/ is an alveolar voiceless fricative, and /θ/ is an interdental voiceless fricative. In terms of Praat, the spectrograms are clearly different. Below in Figure 1 and Figure 2, spectrograms of 'sank' and 'thank' have been provided. The [s] sound in Figure 1 is found at the 0.425 second mark till about the 0.6 mark on the time axis. It is the portion at the beginning that stretches from the 2 mark on the frequency axis to the 5 mark. The [θ] sound in Figure 2 stretches from about the 0.425 second mark to the 0.35 mark on the time axis. It is the portion that stretches from the 3-5 marks on the frequency axis.

Figure 1. A spectrogram of sank (Macquarie University, 2009).
As the spectrograms show, the [s] sound appears as a greater amount of energy in the higher frequencies than the [θ] sound.

The second potential difference may need more explaining, however. Mack and Munson describe hyperarticulated /s/ as an: "/s/ with a high peak frequency and an extremely negatively skewed spectrum..." (Munson, Jefferson, et. al., 2006 qtd. in Mack & Munson, 2012, p. 200). It appears that Mack and Munson are describing an /s/ sound that is, in essence, articulated with more force at the onset of the sound (Mack & Munson, 2012, p. 200). This means that there is a high peak frequency at the onset of the sound that tapers off by the next sound in the sequence of the word.

In a laboratory study, Buchner (2012) has speakers present their renditions of gay speech. The participants would come into the laboratory, and they were asked to perform a gay person's voice (Buchner, 2012). These speech samples are then analyzed for a difference between [s] and [θ].
For the purpose of this study, the samples were analyzed for a difference between [s] and [ş]. Mack & Munson (2012) describe a frontal/dental [ş]; they talk about how the dental [ş] can be associated with stereotypical gay speech (p. 201). Because I do not feel that the stereotypical gay lisp is a matter of pronouncing the [s] sounds interdentally, the dental [ş] seems to be the best option for analysis. Overall, the matter of exactly where the /s/ is being produced is not the purpose of this study. Instead, this study's aim is to determine if there is a difference in the pronunciation.

In order to determine whether the comedians were employing the lisp, I made judgments about what the [s] sounds were; however, because the samples were already in Praat, I used Praat to ultimately determine a sound that I was not entirely sure about. In a spectrogram, I was looking for an [s] sound that had less energy at high frequencies than the [s] sound in Figure 1. The interdental [θ] has less energy at high frequencies, so the dentalized [ş] is assumed to follow this pattern of a more forward placed voiceless fricative having less noise show up in the spectrogram. In cases like this, the /s/ sound in question was compared to a coded /ş/ and a coded /s/ in order to match the sound and ultimately make a decision. I compared that frequency (in this case average number of [ş] for [s] instances) to the natural speech moment. Also, for ease of transcription, the voiced alveolar fricatives, the [z] sounds, were included because I noticed that some comedians actually fronted these sounds (and in some cases almost devoiced them); however, they were transcribed as either [s] (corresponding to [z]) or [ş] (corresponding to [ţ]). Voicing is not necessarily important in this study. The fronting is all that matters.

One example of a difficult judgment was found in Taylor's performance. The spectrogram of that sound can be found in Figure 5.
Figure 5. A spectrogram of Taylor's difficult-to-judge [s] sound.

This spectrogram was compared to those found in Figures 6 and 7. When the three images were compared, it was ultimately determined that 'strange' started with [s] and not [g] because the sound in question has more energy at higher frequencies. The image in Figure 7 has a very light image, which means it has less energy. In similar cases, this same analysis was carried out.

Figure 6. A spectrogram of a known [s] sound in Taylor's speech.
'Brownies' would end in the [z] sound because the plural marker follows a vowel sound, so the voicing is being assimilated into the marker. However, this is one of the examples where the comedian fronts the sound and devoices it.

**Measuring –iŋ and –in:**

The possible moments for the velar voiced nasal, [−iŋ], and the alveolar voiced nasal, [−in], in the presented gay speech and the natural speech were totaled. The actual occurrences of [−iŋ] and [−in] in the presented gay speech and the natural speech were also determined. For this study, all [−iŋ] moments were considered (i.e. gerunds, progressives, nouns, and any other forms that end in [−iŋ]) In cases when the speaker uttered 'going to' as 'gonna', I coded for [−in]. Again, I relied on my own ear to determine which of the two was being used, and I used Praat in cases that were not clear. In Praat, the [−iŋ] sound appears with the second and third formant coming together (see description of figure 8 below).
Figure 8. *A Pam, a tan, a kang* nasal examples (Ladefoged, 2015).

'A tan' and 'a kang' are the spectrograms of interest (the one in the middle and far right).

If you look at the second and third formants (the second is around 2,000 Hz and the third is around 3,000), you can see that in 'a tan' the alveolar nasal [n] appears with the formants separated. In 'a kang', those formants come together above the 2,000 Hz line.

In cases where I had trouble identifying the sound, spectrograms of known [-in] sounds and [-in] sounds were compared to the spectrograms of the sound in question. The longer noise in the upper frequency and the vertical line were clues to code for [-in]. If these were not present, the [-in] sound was coded.

One example of a difficult /-in/ judgment was found in X's performance. The spectrogram of that sound can be found in Figure 9.
Figure 9. A spectrogram of D'Elia's difficult-to-judge [-ın] sound.

This spectrogram was compared to those found in Figures 10 and 11. My original reaction was to label the sound in Figure 9 as [-ın]. However, the sound quickly blends into the onset sound of the word 'out'. So, I wanted to be sure that I was hearing this correctly.

Figure 10. A spectrogram of a known [-ın] sound in D'Elia's speech.
When compared to Figures 10 and 11, it becomes apparent that Figure 9 has the ending with the alveolar nasal [-in]. In between the two lines in Figure 9, the second and third formants are separated in the nasal sound, which means the nasal is alveolar. This matches Figure 11, which I judged to end in [-in]. It is important to note that Figures 9 and 11 differ from Figure 10. In Figure 10, the second and third formant come together, which means the nasal is velar. Moreover, it shows that the nasal in Figure 9 is not the velar [-in] sound.

**Results:**

**Pitch:**

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comedian</th>
<th>Natural (Hz)</th>
<th>Performed (Hz)</th>
<th>Difference (Hz)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>193.98</td>
<td>238.22</td>
<td>44.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dees</td>
<td>199.15</td>
<td>280.31</td>
<td>81.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulaney</td>
<td>187.63</td>
<td>189.93</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'Elia</td>
<td>213.82</td>
<td>182.87</td>
<td>-30.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the average pitch for the heterosexual comedians' performed speech acts and natural speech acts. The difference column shows if there was a positive or negative difference between the natural and performed acts. As the table shows, D'Elia was the only comedian who actually lowered his average pitch with a drop of 30.95 Hz. This could be because D'Elia was actually imitating a gay friend of his, and his friend may actually have a deep voice. It is also interesting to point out that Mulaney only had an average difference of 2.30 Hz. Mulaney is actually mimicking himself as a child, so he may not see the need to change the pitch.

The mean frequency of the natural voice ($M=198.65$ Hz, $SD=11.16$) for heterosexual comedians was lower than the mean frequency for the performed voice ($M=222.83$ Hz, $SD=45.53$). The total mean difference was 24.18 Hz ($SD=48.88$).

Table 3 shows the average frequencies for the natural and performed voices for the homosexual comedians. Again, the column indicating the difference between the two shows the increase in pitch (positive value) or decrease in pitch (negative value). There are actually two comedians in this group who lower their pitch. Gleeson lowers his average pitch by 8.24 Hz, and Morris lowers his pitch by 35.22 Hz. Gleeson's pitch difference is actually quite small, and it was actually undetectable to the researcher's ear. However, Morris's pitch difference is substantially larger. Morris's performed gay character is also trying to be sexy, which may explain why he chooses to lower his voice.
The mean frequency for the homosexual comedians' natural voice was also lower than the mean frequency for the performed voice; however, that difference ($M=8.42$ Hz, $SD=37.45$) is smaller than the difference for the heterosexual comedians ($M=24.18$ Hz, $SD=48.88$).

*s* production

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heterosexual Comedians' <em>/s</em>/ Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'Elia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the */s*/ production instances for the heterosexual comedians. Mulaney and D'Elia do not change their production of [s]. Dees has the most dramatic shift. In his natural voice, he uses [s] 100% of the time. Conversely, he uses [s] 100% of the time when performing gay speech. Taylor has 100% [s] production in his natural voice; however, he switches to using [s] 7 out of the 11 possible instances.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homosexual Comedians' <em>/s</em>/ Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gleeson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adomian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 highlights the instances of [s] production for the homosexual comedians. Morris naturally has the dentalized [s], so he is the only one who accounts for the [s] sound in the natural voice.
Because Morris naturally produces the dentalized \([\ddot{s}]\), I felt it necessary to present this data without him in order to paint a clear picture about people who are consciously choosing the dentalized \([\dddot{s}]\). The most startling difference is in Adomian's performance. He has 18 possible /s/ sounds in his natural voice, and all 18 are realized as \([s]\); however, he has 15 possible /s/ sounds in his performed voice, and all 15 are realized as \([\ddot{s}]\). The other comedians showed no change.

\(-i\ddot{n}\) production

Table 7 shows the \(-i\ddot{n}\) productions for the heterosexual comedians in their natural and performed voices. There were not enough instantiations of \(-i\ddot{n}\) in the heterosexual data. The only comedian, Taylor, who produced it in the natural voice, did not produce it in the performed voice, and the only comedian, Mulaney, who produced it in the performed voice, did not produce it in his natural voice.

Table 6

*Homosexual Comedians' /s/ Production (Without Morris)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Natural Total</th>
<th>Natural ([s])</th>
<th>Natural ([\ddot{s}])</th>
<th>Performed Total</th>
<th>Performed ([s])</th>
<th>Performed ([\ddot{s}])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gleeson</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sank</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adomian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Heterosexual Comedians' /-i\ddot{n}/ Production*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Natural Total</th>
<th>Natural (-i\ddot{n})</th>
<th>Natural (-i\ddot{n})</th>
<th>Performed Total</th>
<th>Performed (-i\ddot{n})</th>
<th>Performed (-i\ddot{n})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulaney</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'Elia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Performed</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>[-in]</td>
<td>[-in]</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>[-in]</td>
<td>[-in]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gleeson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sank</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adomian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 contains the homosexual comedians' productions of /-in/ in their natural voice and performed voice. The most interesting phenomenon here is that Gleeson, Morris, and Sank all switched from [-in] in their natural voice to [-in] in their performed gay voices. It is possible that this is indicative of the informal nature of mimicry, though I do not consider these performances mimicry because the comedians are performing an idea of speech and not performing a particular person's speech.

V. Discussion

This study's main aim was to determine how salient three stereotypically "gay" features (lisp, pitch, and /-in/) were in moments of gay performance in stand-up comedy. Ultimately, raising the pitch in the performance appears to be a common tactic for heterosexual comedians. There only appears to be one exception, and that is D'Elia, who, again, was mimicking his gay friend. His friend may have a naturally deep voice, so D'Elia may have been focused on features his friend exhibits rather than features stereotypically associated with the gay community. Mulaney's difference was quite small; however, as previously stated, he was mimicking himself as a child. This does not mean that Mulaney was gay as a child and grew up to be straight. Mulaney is mocking himself and saying that he was not a very masculine child. He says that he was like an old queen (an effeminate gay man) as a kid. Because he was performing his younger self, he may not have seen any need to raise his pitch.
For the gay comedians, two of the four lowered their pitch when performing the gay voice. Gleeson has a small difference in his average pitch, and it was not noticeable to my ear, which would suggest that Gleeson does not feel the need to raise his pitch when performing a gay voice. Morris had a significant lowering in pitch; however, he was attempting to create a sexy voice as well. He would say things like, "Oh, sweetie what are you looking for? Oh, I got something you can smoke!" It is possible that when one is attempting to perform a seductive voice they may lower their pitch to add to the attraction.

What is interesting is looking at the two comedians who did raise their pitch. Adomian raised his pitch by 48.76 Hz, which was actually the second highest difference between all comedians gay and straight in the direction of a raised pitch. Sank also raised his pitch by 28.40 Hz. This may not mean that he feels that gay men speak with a higher frequency. He is performing a gay man who he believes is performing a black woman's persona. So, he may raise his pitch because, ultimately, the performance has a woman in mind.

The fact that so many comedians did raise their mean frequency is evidence that a higher pitch is still associated with gay men by many of the comedians. Because the comedians are playing to the audience, it can also be assumed that the audience members make the same association. This is further supported by the fact that the audience, in all cases, laughed. There was no offense taken by the audience in any of the performances. However, this tactic seems to be employed more by straight men than it is for gay men, which suggests that it is more common for gay men to not feel it is necessary to use this feature to denote a gay voice performance and straight men do overall. Perhaps, straight men are attempting to distance themselves. By performing the gay character, you are essentially standing in front of the audience as a "gay male" for a short time. The straight men would be more concerned with keeping their own
sexuality clear. That could explain why the straight comedians are so willing to raise their pitch and create that clear difference between who they are and who the character is.

The analysis of the lisp also highlighted some interesting phenomena. For heterosexual comedians, the lisp was not used in the natural voice; however, two of the comedians employed the lisp when performing the gay voice. Taylor favored the lisp when using the gay voice; however, he still produced [s] four times out of a total of 11. This to me suggests a clear use of performance. The comedian is purposefully switching to the dentalized [s̪] in order to create the gay character; however, he cannot keep up the charade the entire time.

Dees actually uses the lisp the entire time during his gay performance. What is interesting about Dees's performance is that he does not introduce the voice as a "gay voice". He is talking about social media and switches to a joke about Google cats. After he finishes that bit, he comments on how gay his voice sounded during the Google cats performance. He says something to the effect of, "I know what you all are thinking; he does that gay voice a little too good." Clearly, he knows that his audience will pick up on these features and know that his voice sounds gay.

It is important to note again that D'Elia is quoting his friend, and may not employ the lisp because his friend does not use it. And for Mulaney, he may not employ it because he is performing a satirized former self.

The homosexual comedians, overall, stick with their natural voices when performing the gay voice. If they do not naturally have the lisp, they do not employ it when performing their gay character. If they do naturally have the lisp, they keep it when performing the gay character. The only one who makes a conscious effort to switch is Adomian. He does not have the lisp in his natural voice; however, when he switches to the performed voice, he uses the dentalized /s/
exclusively. Adomian is clear to point out that the performances are popularized "gay villains". He says that he obsessed with the archetype of the gay villain. He points out that his performances are his renditions of these characters that could be found in movies and TV shows. He often performs the Sheriff of Nottingham from Robin Hood, Megatron from Transformers, and Starscream, also from Transformers. Essentially, Adomian may not be performing these characters in this manner because he absolutely believes that these are stereotypical features. Instead, he may be performing what he has observed in popular culture.

The lisp, though still a feature employed by some of the comedians does not appear to be as stereotypically salient as pitch. Most of the comedians apparently did not feel that it was necessary to perform the gay voice with a lisp. However, there are some who do. It is possible that this feature is losing its prominence as a gay feature in the American mindset. If comedians do not feel this feature is necessary for the audience to recognize the character's sexuality, it is possible that the audience, which is a representative of the populace, does not associate this feature with gay men to the extent that it did in the past. Though, this would need further examination to see if that number has been declining over time or if there have never really been a lot of people who make this association.

The analysis of [iŋ] cannot paint a clear picture as of yet because the routines did not have a lot of instances in the natural or performed voice. And, sometimes, the comedians had moments of [iŋ] in their natural voice and did not have moments in their performed voice and vice versa. However, it is interesting to look at comedians who did have [iŋ] moments in both speech acts.

For the heterosexual comedians, that leaves D'Elia. In each speech act, there were 2 possible /iŋ/ moments, and the realization of [iŋ] and [iŋ] were even (1 of each) in the natural
speech act; however, in the performed speech act, both instances were [-in]. There is no evidence here that D'Elia was manipulating this feature in order to make his performance sound gayer. More data is necessary to determine if other straight comedians might be manipulating this feature; however, this sample does not provide any evidence of that.

Mulaney did not have any [-ɪŋ] moments in his natural voice; however, he did have some moments in his gay voice, and he favored the [-ɪn] form. Both of his possible [-ɪŋ] sounds were realized as [-ɪn].

For the homosexual comedians, Gleeson, Morris, and Sank all had moments of [-ɪŋ] in both speech acts. For Gleeson, he favored the [-ɪŋ] form in his natural speech, and he favored the [-ɪn] form in his performed speech. This holds true for Morris and Sank as well. This might suggest the informal nature of performing these voices. In other words, when they are setting up the stories in their natural voice, they might feel the need to be more formal, and when they switch to the gay voice, they can be less formal because it is a performance of an originally unperformed moment. For example, Gleeson is mimicking these gay men at a bar who are inviting him into the bathroom to do drugs. When this story originally happened, it would be a very informal speech act, so the [-ɪn] may come through in the performance to help highlight that.

Adomian does not have [-ɪŋ] moments in his natural voice; however, he does have them in his performed voice, and they are realized as [-ɪŋ] both times. This could suggest he feels the need to be more formal with a gay voice, but we would need to look at moments where he does use [-ɪŋ] in his natural voice to be sure.

Adomian's changes, overall, were quite apparent. He incorporated both the lisp and a raised pitch. This is quite interesting. It would seem that Adomian, being a gay male, would want
to move away from these stereotypes and not perpetuate them. However, I do not think that Adomian is performing these features as a projection of what he believes to be a gay voice. Instead, it would seem that Adomian is performing a satirical version of what he is describing as the gay villain archetype. He feels that Hollywood is obsessed with villains being obviously gay, and he builds the characters from there.

Seth Dees had, perhaps, the most striking differences in the heterosexual group. What is interesting here is that Dees does not introduce these characters, who are talking about Google cats, as gay, but he does point out, after the performance of these characters, that he performs that gay voice well. Dees lives in Arkansas where homosexuality is not always viewed highly, and he may be trying to make a satirical point, like Adomian, to his audience.

It is interesting that Morris is the only speaker who naturally uses [s] throughout his natural and performed speech. Even more significant, a homosexual comedian was the only comedian in the sample who naturally has [s]. Van Borsel et. al. (2009) did find that gay men used the lisp more often than any other group (heterosexual men, heterosexual women, and homosexual women). I am not saying that Morris's use is evidence that supports this idea; however, I am interested in the idea of a stylized performance. Is Morris presenting this feature to establish his sexuality from the moment he opens his mouth? Or, has this always been a naturally occurring feature for him? I am curious to know if other gay men might opt for a higher [s] frequency when they are in a situation where they want to purposefully project this identity using a stereotypical feature, but this would need to be investigated with more data.

Though every effort was taken to ensure the best results in this study, there are still a few limitations. First, it is very difficult to find videos of homosexual comedians performing gay voices, so the sample is limited. There are a plethora of videos with heterosexual comedians
performing these voices, which is revealing in its own light. Second, it is difficult to find sample of the comedians' natural voices that do not contain applause, which limits the number of [-iŋ] moments and potentially limits the number of [s] moments. And finally, some of the performed gay speech acts had to contain applause because these moments were so limited in time, though the moments of applause are very minimal. It would also be ideal to find more comedians in order to see if any patterns continue, particularly because the samples are relatively short.

Future research on this subject is definitely needed. It would be interesting to include other races and see how this data might change or be reinforced. Are these features salient in other races and ethnicities? It would also be worthwhile to try and find more Caucasian comedians to see if the saliency within these groups changes or is made more apparent. I think it would also be a good investment of time to at least collect more data on the heterosexual comedians alone to see how that group might change, if at all, with more tokens. Finally, it would be interesting to look at the nature of /-iŋ/ in moments of comedic mimicking. I point this out because of the data in the homosexual group. The data suggested a shift toward the informal form when performing a character, and more data may show that performance of voices is somehow more informal with respects to /-iŋ/.

**VI Conclusion**

Ultimately, this study had two objectives and tested 3 hypotheses:

1. Compare and contrast US and Canadian gay and straight male comedians who are performing “gay voices"

2. Determine the extent to which these features may be stereotypical in Caucasian US and Canadian male stand-up comedy.
And, these two objectives were met. A comparison was made between the two groups, and ultimately, it was discovered that the comedians mostly rely on pitch when performing a gay voice. The lisp is still rather salient; however, there are mixed results, which may be clarified if more data is collected in the future. Finally, /-iŋ/ will definitely require more research. It does not appear to be a feature that is relied on for performing gay voices, but this may not be clear due to the limited data.
References


Comedy Time. (2012, September 28). *The gay voice (Stand up comedy)* [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIHi5Ka1Puo


Appendix

Transcripts:

Key: [s] = [s] or [z]
[ʒ] = [ʃ] or [z]

Straight Comedians:
Matt Taylor-Natural:
I could be walk-[ŋ]ing into a [s]upermarket or I could be walk-[ŋ]ing into one of tho[s]e. As[ŋ]ian ma[s]age parlor[s]. And, you gotta be careful you don't want to have your pant[s] un[ŋ]ipped and walk into like the Asian version of Ralph'[ŋ]. Can you guy[s] do-[ŋ]h about thi[s].
Nope. Alright, I'll have [s]ome of the bologna.

Matt Taylor-Performed:

Chris D'Elia-Natural:
Here'[ŋ] the deal. I don't know why. I don't know why everybody doe[s]n't know thi[s] ok? If you hate gay people for no rea[s]on, [s]traight up, you're gay. Alright? Nobody hate[s] [s]omebody el[s]e for do-[ŋ] [s]ometh-[ŋ] that doe[s]n't affect or involve them at all unle[s] it [s]tir[s] up.

Chris D'Elia-Performed:
Hey man, I'm dat-[ŋ] thi[s] dude and what happened wa[s] we were hang-[ŋ] out the other day; it wa[s] hilariou[s]. Aahh, that'[ŋ] not the point of the [s]tory. Naahhhh. Yea I don't really look at it like that. You know. I didn't fall in love with a dude; I fell in love with a perf[s]on.

Seth Dees-Natural:
But no, on Fa[s]book, you know, let'[ŋ] get on there add me. Let'[ŋ] share thing[s] that other people have created to expre[s] our own individuality. That'[ŋ] what Fa[s]book i[s] for.

Seth Dees-Performed:

John Mulaney-Natural:
I have a girlfriend now, my[ŋ]elf, which i[ŋ] weird becau[s]e I'm probably gay ba[s]ed on the way I act and behave and have walked and talked for 28 year[s].
**John Mulaney-Performed:**
I ju[s]t want to [s]it here and feed my bird[s]. You want me to do what? I'm either hav[-in] a drink or I have to pee. You're liv[-in] the golden year[s] kid, not me.

**Gay Comedians**

**Adam Sank-Natural:**
Watch[-in] the Tudor[s]; that'[s] my other show on Showtime. Do you guy[s] watch the? Henry the VIII. Oh. The mo[s]t homoerotic show. The men. The John. Jonathan Ree[s]e Meyer. Love that show. My favorite thing about that show i[s] uh. Every time the queen walk[s] into the room, she ha[s] thi[s] man[s]ervant who announc[e][s] her.

**Adam Sank-Performed:**
Mmm child, you work[-In] my la[s]t nerve, ok? Plea[s]e. We shall overcome. Shit. Plea[s]e. Beh mmm. Uh uh honey, what I am i[s] a proud black woman trapped in a gay man'[s] body. Ok?

**James Adomian-Natural:**
I, uh, I. I've talked about my life and good guy[s] and bad guy[s], but one thing I am ob[s]e[s]ed with i[s] the archetype of the gay villain. It i[s] my favorite thing in the world. That'[s] why I wear my thin mu[s]tache and pointy beard. Almo[s]t to con[s]iou[s]ly court the look of a gay villain becau[s] I'm fa[s]inated. Thi[s] tell[s] you. Alway[s] the thin mu[s]tache. It'[s] a common thing.

**James Adomian-Performed:**
Welcome to my chamber of [s]ecret[s]. Thi[s] i[s] my curious[a][s]o[i]ate Raul. Our relationship. Our relationship need not be [s]pe[s]ified. Raul, fetch the murder[-in] [s]lipper[s]. Megatron! Shut up [s]tar[s]cream! Why aren't we de[s]eiv[-in] the Autobot[s]? Can it power bottom.

**Rob Gleeson-Natural:**
I've had a big year. Uh. I have. A couple month[s] ago, I came out of the clo[s]et a[s] gay. uh. For me the harde[s]t part about com[-in] out wa[s] track[-in] down everybody that I went to high [s]chool with, [s]o I could tell them that they were right. It'[s] weird, after you come out, [s]o many people from your pa[s]t

**Rob Gleeson-Performed:**
Hey. We're all gonna go into the bathroom. You wanna come with? Hey. We're all gonna go into the [s]tall. Do you wanna come with? Hey. We're all gonna go into thi[s] tiny [s]liploc bag. Do you wanna come with?

**Ted Morris-Natural:**
I like the [s]ummer becau[s]e it'[s] ea[s]ier to pick out my gay brother[s]. The winter, it'[s] hard cu[s] everyone look[s] gay in the winter. If you are wear[-in] the wrong shoe[s] and it'[s] [s]lippery and you're runn[-in] for the bu[s], aahh.
Ted Morris-Performed:
Oh [s]weety, what are you look[-In] for? Oh, I got [s]ometh[-In] you can [s]moke. You don't even know! Oh, you can have the whole thing honey. You can have it all!