

Affective stance and voice quality in a pervasively creaky speaker: Stance objects as a tool for investigating indexical meaning

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With creak now a major object of inquiry for sociophoneticians, the meaning of this phonation type has been a matter of much discussion. These discussions often focus on the gendered meanings attached to creak, which has been linked most consistently to young American English-speaking women (e.g. Yuasa 2010, Podesva 2013). Like any indirect indexical relationship, however, the link between creak and femininity is not without exception, such as Mendoza-Denton's analysis of creak as part of a *cholo* (i.e. Chicano gangster) style. Crucially, the relationship between creak and this form of masculinity is mediated by a more direct association between creak and being *hardcore* – a form of toughness that requires emotional stoicism and which can also be embodied *cholas*. In addition to reminding us that accounts of identity formation must be intersectional, Mendoza-Denton's analysis also stands out for highlighting the affective potential of creak.

Emotion is often mentioned in sociolinguistic discussions of voice quality (e.g. Laver 1980), but has not typically been a focal point of sociophonetic analyses of creak. By exploring the meaning of creak through an analysis of affective stance, this paper also contributes to the growing interest in integrating stance into sociolinguistic and sociophonetic analysis (e.g. Kiesling 2011, Freeman 2014). Here stance is operationalized by way of Du Bois' notion of the *stance object* (2007:147-149) – i.e. the thing, person, situation, etc. toward which stances are directed. Using the stance object as a unit of analysis proves useful because it allows for the simultaneous mapping of multiple stances within a single interval of talk, each of which can be coded for intensity, valence, and so forth. Furthermore, it enables the analyst to explore the overarching logic that ties individual stances to one another, rather than treating each expression of stance as a isolated unit. Each stance object can then be tied to a number of utterances which can be compared either to one another or to some other stance object.

This stance object-based approach is illustrated through analysis of interview and conversational data from a speaker who makes pervasive use of creak: "James," a white, upper-middle class non-binary/genderqueer transgender 24-year-old from New England who participated in a longitudinal sociophonetic ethnography on transgender people in the early stages of masculinizing hormone therapy. James troubles binary-based theories of creak's gendered significance, but he also illustrates how creak can index disengagement from strong emotion in ways that align with observations of normatively gendered populations. The most important trends from these data for the purpose of understanding creak and affect is the bimodal distribution of creaky utterances – particularly those produced entirely in creak – which cluster around both the strongest and weakest affective stances. Rather than a contradiction, these findings provide quantitative support for Zimman's (2015) argument that creak can either indicate a lack of emotional engagement or serve to contain emotional "leakage" in cases where strong feelings may be unwanted or inappropriate to express. Affective engagement then provides the (indirect) indexical material for elaboration through a variety of sociotypes.

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