Title: "Twang" in discursive constructions of language variation in American English

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ABSTRACT: This paper offers a new approach to language attitudes and ideologies in which the data are analyzed using a rhetorically-oriented method which combines argumentation theory with conversation-analytic techniques. This discourse-based, qualitative examination uses interview data to explore how socioindexical and language-related meanings of folk-linguistic concepts are constructed in conversations among Oklahoma English speakers. "Twang" was selected as a test case because it is often mentioned by non-linguists as a common descriptor of differences in American English. The analysis reveals a complex … index symbolic social boundaries between unmarked and "lesser" forms of whiteness in the American South.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Twang" is often mentioned by non-linguists as a descriptor of linguistic differences in American English (Preston 1999). Sociolinguists have defined "twang" as a nasal manner of speech (e.g., Montgomery 2008; Jacewicz, Fox and Lyle 2009), but language users' understandings of the term have not received much analytical attention. While some meanings of "twang" and its collocations have been revealed in several studies, they have not been the main focus of analysis since folk-linguistic studies in the USA have been predominantly concerned with exploring geographically-delimited distinctions in non-linguists' perceptions of dialectal differences (e.g., Long and Preston 2002; Hartley 2005; Bucholtz et al. 2007, among others). In-depth sociolinguistic investigations that are focused on conceptualizations of specific folk-linguistic notions are quite rare; a few examples of such work include Hall-Lew and Stephens' (2012) study of "Country Talk," as well as Johnstone's (1999), Allbritten's (2011), Lide's (2014) and Oxley's (2015) examinations of the concept "southernness." However, the studies of folk-linguistic concepts and their functioning in contextualized constructions of sociolinguistic indexicality are needed to better understand language users' own conceptions of the social meanings of language variation (Niedzielski and Preston 2003; Irvine and Gal 2009) and the ways in which such meanings may become ideologically interlinked in a region of a sociolinguistic indexical field (Eckert 2012).

This article explores language-related and social meanings of "twang" that are constructed by American English speakers in everyday discourse about language variety in the USA. Previous research in perceptual dialectology has shown that "twang" is used in respondents' descriptions of the dialectal differences in Kentucky (Cramer 2013) and Tennessee (Cramer 2010), West Virginia (Evans 2002), Oklahoma (Hall-Lew and Stephens 2012; Bakos 2013), and Texas (Cukor-Avila et al. 2012; Oxley 2015). Non-linguists often find it challenging to define the term (Oxley 2015), but some of the frequently cited associations include the notions of rurality and "southernness." Texan respondents, for example, defined "twang" as "overpronunciating the Southern dialect" (2015, 177) and linked "a thick, twangy Southern accent" with a lack of education and with the social stereotypes of "hillbilly," "country," "hick," and "redneck" (2015, 183). The term "twang" was also shown to be prevalent in Californians' comments on Southern dialectal features (Fought 2002). These results suggest that "twang" is

associated with linguistic features and social meanings which are salient in perceptions of the Southern speech in American English including perceptions of the social personae of rural white Southerners.

The socioindexical profile of "twang," however, does not seem to be confined to associations with "southernness." An Ohioan participant in Benson's (2003) perceptual study, for example, used a label "Midwestern twang" to describe the speech in the greater part of Ohio and all of Indiana, while the label "upper Midwest twang" was used to describe the language variety in the northeastern corner of Ohio and in lower Michigan. On the Pacific coast, in the state of Washington, some respondents described a part of their state as having "Canadian twang" (Evans 2011). These data suggest that "twang" may refer more generally to a distinct manner of speaking.

However, folk respondents do not often mention "nasality" as a defining feature of the term, and this is at odds with the definition of "twang" normally used by sociolinguists. In Michigan, for example, where the use of nasal features is quite common in non-nasal environments (Plichta 2004, 23) "twang" does not appear to be commonly used among non-linguists to describe Michiganders' speech (Niedzielski and Preston 2003). Considering the dearth of research on the meanings of the term "twang," this study is aimed at exploring language-related and socio-cultural associations that this "folk-concept" (Agha 2007, 191) may have in language users' discursive constructions of linguistic difference. The analysis reveals that "twang" is associated with a cluster of linguistic features and a set of socioindexical meanings contextualized and valorized differentially in local discursive practices of everyday communication.

2. FOLK-LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS AS CARRIERS OF SOCIOINDEXICAL MEANINGS

The socioindexical meaning potential (Eckert 2012) of folk-linguistic notions is seen in this paper as part of ideological conceptualizations and sociocultural interpretations of linguistic distinctiveness which serve a mediating function (Silverstein 1979; Irvine 1989) in language users' metapragmatic constructions of indexical relations between linguistic forms and social phenomena (Silverstein 1979, 1993; Verschueren 2000). Recent advances in socioculturally-oriented studies of identity and language variation (see Bucholtz and Hall 2008; Woolard 2008;

van Compernolle 2011; and Eckert 2012 for discussion) have offered a theoretical foundation for viewing folk-linguistic concepts as rich sources of information about the meta-semiotic processes of sociolinguistic differentiation. In such studies (e.g., Niedzielski and Preston 2003; Johnstone 1999; Johnstone, Andrus and Danielson 2006; Hall-Lew and Stevens 2012; Soukup 2007), folk-linguistic concepts are seen as gateways to understanding the complexity of socioindexical meanings that language variation has for its agents – language users.

This study is focused on discursively-constructed meanings of the folk-linguistic concept "twang." A discourse-based approach allows for a contextualized analysis of the semiotic complexity of "twang" which emerges in local, reflexive negotiations of the meanings of the term. Through the processes of contextualization, a folk-linguistic concept may reveal its meaning potential that resides in the "dialogicality" (Bakhtin 1981) of everyday discourse reflected in the fluid and dynamic positioning of individual ideological consciousness with respect to other ideological values and points of view available in the micro- or macro-social frames of reference (Silverstein 1993). As this study demonstrates, the appropriation of the semiotic potential of "twang" occurs in the discoursal contexts of its integration into a web of indexical associations that link language-related, social, spatial, and temporal representations thereby constructing a folk-linguistic theory of "twang." These associations derive their relative stability and valorization patterns from language users' shared understandings of the macro-contextual meanings of the terms, but they also acquire context-dependent meanings as a result of participants' selective activation of the regions of the indexical field (Eckert 2012) made relevant in a particular context via the use of interactional and rhetorical strategies in discourse. A rhetorically-oriented approach illustrated in this paper reveals how these strategies are used as part of propositional processes that activate indexical fields associated with the concept "twang" in everyday discourse about language variation.

3. A RHETORICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF FOLK-LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS

Previous discourse-based studies of language ideologies have used methodologies focused on different levels of meaning creation in discourse. Some studies of metalinguistic discourse are anchored in interactional and conversation-analytical approaches (e.g. Soukup 2007; Laihonen 2008; Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain 2009) which rely to a great extent on Goffman's (1981) notions of "positioning," "footing," and "production formats," as well as on the fine-grained

analyses of turn-formation and other structural patterns in the organization of interaction (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). These perspectives are useful in illuminating context-dependent interactional strategies and pragmatic moves made by speakers to construct their identities, relationships, and stances in metalinguistic discourse. But these approaches do not afford a sufficient analytical focus on the ideational function of metalinguistic beliefs.

Another type of approach to language ideologies is based on the rhetorical analysis of argument, such as, for example, Preston's (1994) approach to the minimal structure of oppositional argument which is aimed at uncovering sources of disagreement on language-related issues. Considering that disagreements do not surface in all discoursal data, Thøgersen (2010) broadens Preston's focus and applies argument analysis to the language-ideological positions that can potentially be disputed. These approaches to argument reveal presuppositional load of utterances, but the interpretations of such data are different: while Preston's analysis of presuppositions mainly engages local interactional concerns and participants' identity positions, Thøgersen views presuppositions as indicative of language users' assumptions about the sharedness of the macro-ideological knowledge structures in a speech community. Both analytical techniques, however, emphasize rhetorical functions of argument components, such as "position," "support," and "dispute," over the conceptual and inferential relations in argument structures.

This article illustrates an approach to ideational aspects of language ideology construction in discourse which applies the analytical framework of argumentation theory (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Walton 2008) and integrates it with conversation-analytic (e.g. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) perspectives to analyze contextually-situated discursive constructions of "twang." On the one hand, argumentation theory is employed in this paper to study the propositional and rhetorical structures of discursive rationalizations of folk-linguistic beliefs associated with "twang." On the other, conversation-analytic techniques are used to examine the micro-level linguistic choices that point to participants' orientations to the content and context of metalinguistic discourse. Thus, the approach used in this paper combines an analytical focus on the propositional content and rhetorical strategies in argument with a micro-level examination of linguistic realizations of such strategies.

The importance of examining ideational functions of metalinguistic beliefs as well as rhetorical strategies of ideology construction is clearly indicated in the definitions of "language ideologies" commonly used in many studies of discourse on the topic of language variation. For example, language ideologies are often seen in Silverstein's (1979, 193) terms as beliefs "articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use," in Kroskrity's (2010, 192) terms as "attempts to rationalize language usage," or in Irvine and Gal's (2009, 403) terms as part of behavior of noticing, rationalizing, and justifying linguistic indices. As can be seen from these definitions derived from influential linguistic-anthropological theories, "rationalization" and "justification" of beliefs are important aspects of language ideology creation. They evoke a view of ideology which Friedrich (1989) described as "ideational, intellectual, and conceptual constituent of culture." In this sense, ideology has "a considerable degree of coherence and direction, an agenda, and a validating, mythic aspect" (1989, 301).

The rhetorical analysis in this paper applies the descriptive dimension of argumentation theory. In other words, the purpose of this application is not to evaluate the validity or effectiveness of everyday arguments, but to use the descriptive inventories of argumentation techniques and rhetorical strategies (e.g. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Walton 2008) in order to examine the propositional content of metalinguistic beliefs and the relations between their conceptual constituents.

Argumentation is viewed here not as a special form of discourse or as a form of resolving disagreement (van Eemeren 2010), but as an inherent part of all language use including everyday informal communication (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Verhagen 2005; Howard 2005) wherein "… every utterance is taken as orienting the addressee towards certain conclusions by invoking some shared model in which the object of conceptualization figures" (Verhagen 2005, 10). This understanding of "argumentation" defines it both in terms of inferential relations between the components of argument structure and in terms of its contextualized embeddedness in pragmatic relations in discourse.

The New Rhetoric approach to argumentation (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) used in this paper lays out a framework for conceptual analysis of arguments in relation to underlying value judgments (75). It views everyday argumentation as a form of justifying values

that speakers attribute to conceptualized phenomena. Argumentation is seen as relying on assumptions about the agreement on values and hierarchies of concepts shared in a particular group of speakers: "a particular audience is characterized less by which values it accepts than by the way it grades them" (81). According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), justifications and rationalizations of values are created through the processes of association and dissociation of concepts which underlie all argumentation in everyday communication:

> By processes of association we understand schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them, which aims either at organizing them or at evaluating them, positively or negatively, by means of one another. By processes of *dissociation* we mean techniques of separation which have the purpose of dissociating, separating, disuniting elements which are regarded as forming a whole or at least a unified group within some system of thought: dissociation modifies such a system by modifying certain concepts which make up its essential parts (190).

Argumentation theory distinguishes between different argument schemes that connect and disconnect conceptual elements by establishing different types of inferential relations between them which often rely on defeasible or presumptive structures of inference (Walton 1989): the arguer may presume data and make use of plausible premises and draw conclusions that can be later modified or invalidated. The type of inferential relations between premises and a conclusion of an argument is the basis for identification of argumentation "techniques," which, according to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), may (1) resemble formal logic (e.g., arguments by comparison and transitivity, contradiction and incompatibility, etc.), (2) rely on existing structure of reality (e.g., arguments from causality, authority, group and its members, etc.), or (3) establish the structure of reality (e.g., argumentation by example, analogy, model and anti-model, etc.).

This article proposes that for the purposes of a sociolinguistic study of language ideologies, conceptual connections and dissociations constructed in metalinguistic arguments may be analyzed as part of speakers' metapragmatic activity of sociolinguistic indexicality. Thus, the New Rhetoric approach to the role of values and conceptual relations in argument is used in this paper to analyze the discursive construction of socioindexical connections in what Agha (2007, 15) calls "schemes of speech valorization" which associate "twang" with

"commonplace value distinctions." Other argumentation strategies made relevant to this analysis of folk-linguistic beliefs include arguers' selection of the point of departure in an argument, their choice of forms of support for conclusions, the source of evidence they rely on, the interlocutors' reactions to the implied or expressed propositions, their acceptance or refutation of premises, as well as the presentational devices (linguistic and rhetorical) chosen to formulate positions. An integrated approach that combines rhetorical and conversation-analytic perspectives helps account for the role played by rhetorical strategies and processes of informal reasoning in discursive, intersubjective constructions of folk-linguistic beliefs.

4. REGIONAL IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES OF OKLAHOMA

The data for this qualitative study come from conversations with the residents of Oklahoma on the subject of language variation in the state. Oklahoma has an uncertain regional status in both cultural geography (Zelinsky 1982) and dialectology (Wikle and Bailey 1997). It is surrounded by several US regions: the West, the Midwest, and the South. According to dialect geographers, Oklahoma is a "borderland region" and the uniqueness of its speech is related to its position at the intersection of several dialect areas (Wikle and Bailey 1997, 71). A number of dialectal isoglosses crossing the state assign its parts to various American English dialect areas, including the West, the Midland, the Texas South, and the South (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006). Dialectal border regions are important sites of linguistic studies due to the complexity of production and perception of linguistic styles and identities in such areas (e.g., Hall-Lew and Stephens 2012; Cramer 2013) which may be attributed to the social conflicts and contradictions in the borderlands (Alvarez 1995).

Previous work in Oklahoma has demonstrated that the most significant social factors that influence language variation in Oklahoma English are rural/urban divide and nativity (Tillery 1992; Wikle and Bailey 1997). Social status and ethnicity were shown to have impact on some linguistic variables (Wikle and Bailey 1997), but generally were not big explaining factors (Tillery 1997). With regard to nativity, length of residence in the neighborhood seems to affect language variation more directly than years of residence in Oklahoma (Tillery 1992, 58). Importantly, at the intersection of nativity (years in the neighborhood) and rurality (size of neighborhood), geographic mobility has emerged as a crucial social factor of language variation in Oklahoma (Tillery 1997, 442).

Studies of Oklahomans' perceptions of the regional identity of their state have shown varied results. For example, over half of Tillery's (1992) respondents considered Oklahoma a Midwestern state, and only one-third assigned it to the American South. About 20 years later, however, almost 70% of 60 young native Oklahoman participants in Bakos' (2013, 54-55) survey agreed with the statements that "Oklahomans are a lot like people from the South" and that "Oklahomans speak like people from the South." Both Midwestern and Southwestern regional affiliations received about 40% of agreement. At the same time, about 30% of these respondents did not describe themselves as "typical Oklahomans" which may suggest a controversy surrounding the issue of self-identification with the state and its collective sociolinguistic stereotypes. The most frequent descriptions of "a typical Oklahoman" in Bakos' data included the labels "country," "friendly," "cowboy," "farmer," "redneck," "hick," "conservative," "hard working," "laid back," and "nice" (2013, 57). These results suggest that a stereotypical Oklahoman identity may be associated in popular imagination with a rural lifestyle and its accompanying positive and negative attributes. These associations may play a role in the tendency of some young Oklahoma natives to distance themselves from an affiliation with "typical Oklahomans."

Historically, Oklahoma English became known outside of the state as a stigmatized "Okie accent" associated with whites who migrated from Oklahoma and other states in the Great Plains to California between 1920s and 1950s, including the "Dust Bowl migration" wave in the Great Depression era. A pejorative label "Okies" was often used to collectively refer to these groups of migrants who were seen as uneducated "poor white trash," "a despised and economically impaired group" that faced "prejudice and hostility" in their new home state (Gregory 1989, 79). "Twang," along with other speech characteristics, was frequently cited (Berryhill 1976; Gregory1991; Waldie 1997, 172) as a distinguishing feature that the Okies tried to hide since it carried the social stigma of the Okie accent. The patterns of linguistic accommodation of Oklahoman migrants in California included avoiding double negatives, "ain'ts," "might coulds," and *g*-dropping, as well as "shortening the diphthongal vowels that give Southwestern speech its characteristic twang" (Gregory1991, 122). Some of the speech characteristics of the Okies are still present in California, especially in the agricultural and oil-rich areas of the San Joaquin Valley (Geenberg 2014; Podesva and Hofwegen 2014; Podesva et al. 2015). Although many of these features have acquired local indexicalities (Geenberg 2014),

perceptual dialectology work has shown that Californians still use labels such as "okies," "country," "cowboys," "farmers," "hicks," "rednecks," "white trash," and "twangy" to distinguish the areas in Northern California and the Inland region of the state (Bucholtz et al. 2007, 345). Most of these labels coincide with those that Oklahomans use to describe identities of "typical" Oklahomans and their links to rural-oriented lifestyles of white Southerners.

Perceptions of the Okie identity in the USA continue to draw on the social memory of the Dust Bowl migrant experience (Jennings 2000; Alexander 2004). Social representations of the Okie accent and of the social personae of the Okies have become part of national awareness and acquired stereotypical associations through portrayals of Oklahoma migrants in public discourse including John Steinbeck's (1939) renowned novel "The Grapes of Wrath" and its famous movie adaptation of the same name, Waldie's (1997) memoir "Holy Land," as well as numerous other literary works (see Jennings 2000 for review) and publications in the periodicals. Although the linguistic features associated with the Okies were introduced by migrants from several US states many years ago, the collective label "Okies" and the folk-linguistic term "Okie accent" are still in current use in the USA and invoke associations that link Oklahoma to typifications of white, rural-based Southern identities.

The stereotypes of "rurality" and "Southernness," however, are in conflict with some of the linguistic and social characteristics of present-day Oklahoma. North-central Oklahoma has been characterized as a "Midwestern" dialect area (Southard 1993) and hosts the state government, two metropolitan areas including Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and two largest universities in the state – the social facts that may define it as a "focal area for a prestige dialect" (243). The urban parts of the state are a site of the expansion of "innovative" linguistic features among newcomers and younger respondents (Wickle and Bailey 1997, 81). In contrast, the southern areas of the state are socially distinct. These areas, including the Texas border and the South-East, are less populated and more rural-oriented; they are more frequently associated with labels that are also used to describe "the Okies" and "typical" Oklahomans. These less urbanized areas form one of the dimensions of linguistic variation in Oklahoma (Southard 1993): they have been described as Southern dialect areas (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006) characterized by a wider use of "recessive" Southern features (Wikle and Bailey 1997, 81). These geographical, social, and linguistic divisions may be seen as important factors defining the language-ideological

tensions that set a background for an opposition between stereotypical and prestige-bearing sociolinguistic representations of Oklahoma English. These tensions complicate the notion of an ambivalent and uncertain regional identity of the state and have implications for understanding the language-ideological and identity-related positions that participants in this study take with regard to language variation in Oklahoma.

5. STUDY CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

This article draws on a corpus of discoursal data collected for a larger project from the residents of Oklahoma City metropolitan area. To provide a contextualized account of language-ideological constructions of "twang," this paper mainly focuses on the data derived from a conversation with four Oklahomans and a follow-up interview with one of the participants. The conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed (see Appendix 1 for transcription conventions), and some aspects of the participants' linguistic productions, such as pitch contours, vowel and pause duration, were measured using Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2013). The multi-party conversation lasted about 50 minutes and took place at one of the participants' home in a relaxed setting of a casual talk among friends. The "draw-a-map" task (Preston 1999) was used to start the conversation on the topic of language variation. But, to approximate the conditions of an informal, naturally-developing conversation and to avoid an influence on the topical development of discourse, the interviewer's role was confined to directing the discussion to the topic of language variation in the US and Oklahoma. As a result, most topic transitions were initiated by the participants themselves.

The participants of this conversation are friends with each other, belong to the same local community and church groups, and travel together. Their background is as follows:

Susan[1] (Sus): female, age 81, white, Associate's degree, 8 years in a small town in southern Oklahoma, 72 years in Oklahoma City;

Sharon (Sha): female, age 84, white, Associate's degree, 12 years in a small town in western Texas, 72 years in the suburb of Oklahoma City;

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[1] All names are pseudonyms.

Jocelyn (Joc): host, female, age 76, white, Bachelor's degree, 43 years in Oklahoma City (childhood and later years), 7 – in Kansas, 3 – in Virginia, 24 – in California;

Jennifer (Jen): female, age 79, white, Bachelor's degree, 56 years in Oklahoma City (childhood and later years), 6 – in Virginia, 2 – in Nebraska, 7 – in California, 3 – in Louisiana.

These participants represent two types of speakers: those whose identity is more place-bound, and those whose identity is more ambivalent. Sharon and Susan lived in Oklahoma most of their lives. In contrast, Jocelyn and Jennifer lived in several different locations in the USA, although they spent their childhood, adolescence, and later years of life in Oklahoma. Jocelyn and Jennifer are not typical respondents primarily focused on in the quantitative variationist research in sociolinguistics (see Eckert 2003, 392-393 for discussion): they are not the "pure" type of a native dialect speaker who has lived in one place most of their life. They represent the "migrating" type of respondent who usually accumulates more experience of language contact with dialect speakers from other geographical areas and may develop a rather ambivalent linguistic identity.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Twang and Spatial Boundaries of Dialectal Distinctions

"Twang" was first mentioned in the analyzed conversation by one of the participants when they were labelling the areas of linguistic distinctiveness on the blank map of Oklahoma. Extract 1 shows this first reference to "twang" in the context of a comparison of the linguistic distinctions between Oklahoma and Texas whereby "twang" in Oklahoma English is contrasted with the Texas "drawl."

Extract1:

1   Sus: They are- yeah. (.) They are close to Texas. And ↑Texans (.) have a [(1) real]ly (.)]
2   Joc: [(***) twang]
3   Sus: **dra**[**:::::::::::::wl**].
4   Joc: [They have] a drawl, we have a [twang. (0.4) [Oklahoma] (0.3) Oklahoma had a=
5   Jen: [Uh-huh]
6   Joc: =twang. (1.6) The Texans have a drawl.

          (0.5)

7   Int: So what is a twang. (.) And what is a drawl_

8   Joc: That's where you make two syllables out of one-syllable wo:rds. (0.4)

9   Joc: [When I was gro]wing up, (.) everybody in Oklahoma talked with that (0.5) that=

10   Jen: [I can tell when-]   [

11   Joc: =twang.

          (1.5)

12   Sus: I ↓don't. {*laughter*}

13   Int: [And now_

14   Joc: [Not [now,]

15   Sus: [((*chuckle*))]

16   Joc: Well (.) but [what ↑happened was] ↑television came and educated English

17   Jen: [(***)   ]

18   Joc: began to be ↑heard by people who lived here, ((*PII*))

19   and it changed (0.5) the whole country. (.) you know, (1.0) changed for the better_ (.)

20   @mostly.@

      In line 1, Susan provides a background for this distinction when she identifies Walters - a small town situated close to Texas border - as an example of a distinctive linguistic area on the map of Oklahoma. "They" in line 1 refers to Walters' residents. Here, Susan builds an argument that dissociates Walters from the rest of Oklahoma and associates the speech of its residents with Texans who have a "drawl" implying that this is not a defining feature of the Oklahoma variety. This assertion is made in careful speech marked by a slow tempo, several pauses, a delayed emphatic use of the intensification marker "really," and a linguistic imitation of "drawl" provided through vowel lengthening. "Really" is used as a degree adverb here which construes "drawl" in gradient terms and locates it on a high point of "an abstractly conceived intensity scale" (Quirk et al. 1985, 589). Susan does not explain whether the linguistic distinction between Oklahoma and Texas lies in the absence of "drawl" in Oklahoma, or whether it lies in the intensity of "drawl." Variation in the use of "drawl" is conceptualized here in terms of the geographical proximity of Walters to the Texas state line. A similar conceptualization was used earlier in the same conversation by the other three participants who named the Southern and South-Eastern state border areas, including Durant, Tishimingo, and "Little Dixie," as examples

of linguistically distinct areas in Oklahoma characterized by "a country drawl" and "talking country." This conceptualization of the dialect region reflects the regional boundary in American English dialectology which assigns the southern part of Oklahoma and most of Texas to the Southern dialectal area (e.g. Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006), with "Southern drawl" being one of its often cited linguistic characteristics (Feagin 2015).

The distinction between Texas and Oklahoma provides a conceptual background for the introduction of the notion "twang" into this conversation. In lines 2 and 4, Jocelyn supports the dissociations between Oklahoma and Texas established in Susan's argument and clarifies the difference between the two states by pointing out "twang" as a former linguistic feature of Oklahoma English: "Oklahoma had a twang. The Texans have a drawl." Here, Jocelyn is not considering finer geographical within-the-state distinctions made earlier in the conversation by Susan but constructs a more generalized differentiation along the state boundaries. This simplification of sociolinguistic distinctions serves a rhetorical function of building an argument which contrasts "twang" and "drawl" as distinctive features differentiating the states of Oklahoma and Texas.

This argumentation technique is what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) call an "argument by comparison," "where several objects are considered in order to evaluate them through their relations to each other" (242). In Extract 1, the comparison is argumentatively constructed in the form of an opposition of linguistic identities of Oklahoma and Texas. "Drawl" and "twang" are presented here as distinct features that conceptually have an equal ability to characterize overall linguistic distinctiveness of the two states. An argument by opposition establishes the relation between the terms of comparison, and the interaction between these terms "may be due to an awareness of real connections between the things which are being compared" (244). But, in informal reasoning occurring in the context of everyday communication, non-linguists cannot support such connections with precise acoustic measurements or statistical facts. In order to achieve persuasiveness in discourse in the absence of such factual justification, "… in comparisons, when a distinction between the terms is sought, a constant effort is required to maintain the distance between them" (244). The simplified and essentialist nature of a linguistic characterization of Oklahoma and Texas may be seen as a contribution to such an effort which helps construe "twang" as a term dissociated from "drawl" on the one hand and as a former distinguishing feature of Oklahoma English on the other. The argumentative context of the first

mention of the folk-term "twang" in this discourse is important for its further development in the conversational argumentation "where the terms already set forth form a background which influences new evaluations" (243). Jocelyn's claim "Oklahoma had a twang" (lines 4 and 6) dominates her discussion of language variation in the state throughout the conversation. This claim serves in this discourse the role of a "macroproposition" (van Dijk 1982, 180) which subsumes several subsequent "twang"-related arguments functioning as further supports for Jocelyn's assertion.

6.2 Changes in the Use of Twang over Time

In addition to the spatial aspect of the argumentative context in which "twang" is introduced, there is also a temporal factor revealed in the opposition between the present and the past tenses used in lines 4 and 6 in Extract 1: "Oklahoma had a twang. The Texans have a drawl." The contrast in the choice of the verb tenses denies the relation of co-existence to the phenomena of "twang" and "drawl" in the two neighboring states. But it is doubtful that this assertion accurately reflects Jocelyn's real belief about the current absence of "twang" in Oklahoma, considering the fact that Jocelyn contradicts herself in line 4 as well as later in the conversation when she admits that "we still have that Oklahoma twang" and labels Durant, a city in the south of Oklahoma, as an area with "large twang." Considering this contradictory evidence, the utterance in lines 4-6 may be interpreted as an exaggeration of the diachronic change in the use of twang in Oklahoma aiming at a rhetorical effect of enhancing the distinction between the concepts "drawl" and "twang" both in the temporal and in the spatial domains.

Jocelyn supports this argument with another generalization: "When I was growing up everybody in Oklahoma talked with that that twang" (lines 9 and 11). Here, she cites the fact of her personal childhood experience of living in Oklahoma as an epistemic ground that allows her to make a strong claim about the past prevalence of the linguistic phenomenon of twang in Oklahoma which is recognizably exaggerated. "Everybody" is used non-literally here as a rhetorical device of an "Extreme Case formulation" (Pomerantz 1986) which strengthens the argument by emphasizing the speaker's "investment" (Edwards 2000) in her assertions about the diachronic change in the use of "twang."

To support her assertions further, Jocelyn associates the diminished use of twang in Oklahoma with the influence of the "educated English" introduced by television which "changed the whole country … for the better" (line 19). While the folk argument about the influence of the mass media on language change is very familiar and has some support of scholarly studies (e.g., Lippi-Green 1997; Stuart-Smith 2011), its use in this conversational context is noteworthy since it creates a number of implicit evaluations of the linguistic and social phenomena and events associated with "twang." The social event of the advent of television and the process of linguistic change are associated here via the consequences of the former and, probably, through a causal link, although such a link is not foregrounded or made explicit. The type of argumentation that Jocelyn uses here is "a pragmatic argument" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) which "permits the evaluation of an act or an event in terms of its favorable or unfavorable consequences" (266) since "the consequences … are the basis for the value attributed to the event" (267). Thus, in this argument, the linguistic change is implicitly evaluated positively via a transfer of positive value from the beneficial social consequences of exposure to television and its "educated English" to the linguistic event of a diminished use of twang. At the same time, a linguistic phenomenon of "twang" is implicitly evaluated negatively: since it is given in opposition to "educated English," "twang" acquires an indexical association with the speech of "uneducated" people. This indexical association and its negative evaluation are created here as part of an argument which relies on the assumption about the existing social order of values in which education is valued higher than a lack thereof. Thus, in this argumentative construction, the judgments presumed to be socially accepted are used to create an implicit evaluation of the constructed reality of a temporally- and spatially-bound linguistic change. Note that the other participants in this conversation do not dispute this line of argumentation and let it unfold without challenging it with questions that could put this argument to doubt. Neither they dispute the assertion about the positive influence of television over "the whole country" – the rhetorical move that strengthens Jocelyn's original argument about the change in the use of twang in Oklahoma by a reference to a more global process in which such a change is involved.

6.3 "Twang," Linguistic Self-Identification, and Sociolinguistic Authenticity

There are several ways in which the concept "twang" is implicated in the constructions of the participants' linguistic self-identification and in-group/out-group relations in this conversation.

The first example concerns a self-presentation of linguistic identity which rhetorically dissociates one's speaking style from the use of "twang" and seems to be based on an implicit negative evaluation of this linguistic phenomenon. When Susan emphatically says "I don't" in line 12 of Extract 1, she uses a rhetorical technique of breaking any possible connecting links between "twang" and the way she speaks. This technique is used when "elements which should remain separate and independent have been improperly associated" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 411). The "improper" association which is denied here concerns a possibility of classifying Susan as a member of the conceptual category of "Oklahomans who had a twang": since Susan is the same age as Jocelyn and lived all her life in Oklahoma, Jocelyn's generalization "Everybody in Oklahoma talked with that, that twang" may be interpreted in this context as applicable to Susan's speech. It appears that Susan's objection to a mere possibility of this association with "twang" speakers and her self-initiated topical shift into the realm of personal reference serves the purpose of severing any links that could presumably be constructed to connect Susan's way of speaking to "twang." The use of such a rhetorical technique is, arguably, part of "a corrective effort" in the process of doing "face-work" (Goffman 1955) needed to protect a positive self-image from any negative associations with "twang" which Susan may assume to be shared by the interlocutors. The importance that this type of face-work has for Susan is revealed in her repeated use of a similar strategy of breaking "improper" associations with "twang" in several other episodes of the same conversation.

Another conceptual dimension that implicates the notion of "twang" in the processes of linguistic self-identification in this conversation is the one that concerns the expression of sociolinguistic authenticity achieved by using "twang" to linguistically position oneself as an in-group speaker. Jocelyn repeatedly constructs narrated representations of such sociolinguistic accommodation processes which implicitly ascribe a positive value to "twang" based on its role in creating a sense of social belonging to a speech community. In Extract 2, for example, she reports on her experience of living in California and choosing to "go back to an Oklahoma twang" when she was back in Oklahoma to visit her family:

Extract 2:

1   Joc: and I ↑know when I went to San Francisco, and I (.) talked faster and I walked=
2   =faster, (0.7) when I came back to Oklahoma, (.) which was quite ^often, (0.9) cause

3		((*omitted PII*)) All my friends_ (0.3) put me at arm's length. People I'd gone to=
4		=high school with, college with, (0.2) they weren't ↑friends anymore. They treated=
5		=me like a ↑<u>pariah</u>, [(0.6)] and I thought "what <u>is</u> it," (0.8) and then, (.)
6	Sha:	[((***))]
7	Joc:	that summer, (.) I was trying to ↓analyze why this why they ↑changed, (0.7) and of=
8		=course San Francisco is ↑<u>cooler</u> in the summer. (0.9) Oklahoma was ↑<u>ho:t</u>,
9		(1.4)
10	Sha:	◦ (**[*])◦
11	Joc:	[So. (0.7) I slowed down. I got off the plane_ (0.2) I slowed [do:wn.]
12	Sus:	[((***))]
13		(0.8)
14	Joc:	I went back to an Oklahoma ↓twang. (1.6) And everybody said. (.) ↑Where've you=
15		=↑<u>been</u>,
16		(0.6)
17	Joc:	When I [start]ed ↑speaking like I (.) grew ↑up wi:th, (0.1) and slowed ↓down.
18	Sha:	[↓No] ((*addressing the dog*))
19	Int:	uh-huh_
10	Joc:	Everybody said oh <u>Jocelyn</u>'s back.

"Twang" is presented in Extract 2 as part of a strategy of linguistic and sociocultural accommodation that Jocelyn reports to have selected consciously as a result of her analysis (note "And I thought "What is it" and "I was trying to analyze why … they changed" in lines 5 and 7 of Extract 2) and reflection on the roles that linguistic identities of self and other had played in the history of her interpersonal communication. Argumentatively, "twang" is presented here as part of the causal relation of "a means to its end" rather than the "act-consequence" relation (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 271) between a linguistic form and the social effects of its use which allows Jocelyn to highlight the intentional and strategic character of her linguistic accommodation. This point of view constructs "twang" as a means of resolving the problem of social alienation by indicating in-group membership.

"Twang" is constructed in Extract 2 as a defining feature of Oklahoma English at the time of narration in contrast to the variety Jocelyn acquired while living in San Francisco. California English acquires an implicit negative evaluation via a presumption of a negative estranging effect it has on communication with Oklahomans. In contrast, "twang" is implicitly

evaluated positively in terms of the value it carries to signal belonging to a group of "Oklahoma friends." Thus, "twang" is discursively constructed as indexing what Coupland (2003) calls "authentic cultural membership" which ascribes "twang" a cultural value in a strategic achievement of vernacular authenticity. This type of speech valorization is created by presenting "twang" as a socially authenticating linguistic resource that a speaker can "go back to," in Jocelyn's words, and use as "an anchor for solidarity and local affiliation" (424).

Another narrative account of the use of "twang" for strategic sociolinguistic authentication is given in Extract 3 below.

Extract 3:

1   Joc: and when I started working with the oil companies out there, (.) with ((*PII*)),
2   (0.7) all of the men who ↑<u>ran</u> the oil companies, (.) in ^California (.) were=
3   = from Texas, Oklahoma, and ^Louisiana. (0.9) And I didn't realize it but=
4   =when I'd go into a (0.2) a (0.3) a yard, (1.5) an oil yard or (0.2) petroleum or=
5   =whatever it ^was, (0.4) I just went right back into Oklahoma ^twang, and they=
6   = were ↑comfortable with me [(0.4)   ] and <u>that's</u> why I got ↓business. On a=
7   Sha: [((*chuckle*))]
8   Joc: =↑handshake (1.2) because the way I ^spoke, (.) was the way_ (0.3) and these=
9   =men you'd think (.) they were old_ [(0.6 barbers   ](0.5) they <u>all</u> had at <u>least</u>=
10   Sha: >[They ↓trusted you]<
11   Joc: =Master's degrees. (.) in engineering_ or (0.3) something. you know but you just=
12   =thought they were just good @old boys_@.
13   Jen: ((*chu[ckle*))   ]
14   Sus: @[They were chemical ↑engineers@]
15   Joc: Yah. (.) And I went back into the Oklahoma twang_ (0.5) after ↑fifteen twenty=
16   =↑years (0.2) without even knowing it. (0.4) until I got away from there and=
17   =someone said ↑"Where are you from."
18   Jen,Sha: ((*laughter*))
19   Joc: @"Where are you from."@

In contrast to the narrative in Extract 2, Extract 3 constructs a representation of an unintentional and unconscious process of using "twang" for linguistic accommodation –

something Jocelyn "didn't realize" and did "without even knowing it," albeit with a strategic purpose of making a deal. The narrative in Extract 3 serves as evidence supporting Jocelyn's claim about the causal link between her use of "twang" and her success in making business deals. It contextualizes Jocelyn's shift "back" into "twang" by rhetorically embedding it into a contrast between two communicative situations that involved different social evaluations of "twang" constructed in relation to ingroup-outgroup dynamics of communication.

In lines 1-14 of Extract 3, the first narrated situation of interaction depicts Jocelyn's former business partners as having collective identities associated with two different, contrasted social groups: educated engineers and "good old boys." This argument from group membership (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 322-323) constructs the social meanings of "twang" and its socioindexical properties in relation to the implied social characteristics and social evaluations of these groups. These constructions of sociolinguistic indexicality associate presumptions about the social differences between the groups with the social effects of linguistic accommodation. The first type of group description characterizes its members in rather objective, factual terms as chemical engineers who ran oil companies in California and had Master's degrees. The second description, however, is based on a subjective, attitude-loaded perception of the cultural group membership of interlocutors. Jocelyn says in lines 11-12: "but you just thought they were just good old boys" - an expression which evokes a contrast between the high-status level of education and profession ("Master's degrees" and "chemical engineers") on the one hand, and, on the other, an identity of a "good old boy," which evokes an image of a stereotypical Southern white male with relaxed and informal manners, "and often an anti-intellectual bias and intolerant point of view" (AHD 2016). "Good ol' boy" is also a term that, in the popular culture, may refer to the stigmatized redneck persona (Cobb 2005, 227). This term is introduced in lines 11-12 with a phrase "but you just thought": The plurality and ambiguity in the meaning of "you" here constructs Jocelyn's perception of "good old boys" as something that was not unique to her understanding, but as a more generalized and, hence, stereotypical perception that other people could have as well. In line 12 of Extract 3, "good old boys" is modified by a pragmatic marker "just" which functions in a "diminisher" sense (Preston 1993, 250), with a downtoning meaning (Aijmer 2002, 158) of "this is not much." In the argumentative context of the contrast between two different social identities of the characters in Jocelyn's narrative, "just" is used to rhetorically downplay the social evaluation of the identity of "good old boys." The co-occurrence

of this term with a metaphor "old barbers" (line 9) contributes metapragmatically to establishing an indexical relation between Jocelyn's attitudes and perceptions of the stereotypical social identity of the characters in her narrative and her unconscious linguistic choice of "going back to twang."

The argument from group membership in Extract 3 is a support for Jocelyn's claim in the beginning of the episode that there is a causal relation between a change in her speaking style and her success in making business deals. In lines 6-8, Jocelyn makes an explicit and unmitigated reference to this causal link when she says "and that's why I got business, on a handshake because the way I spoke, was the way." Causality is overtly marked here with "that's why" and "because" –the connectives which express a discourse-level relation between propositions (Sanders and Stukker 2012). This causal relation between a linguistic and a social event creates an argumentative context in which Jocelyn and Sharon co-construct socioindexical links between the shift into "twang" and achievement of trust and "comfortable feeling" in interpersonal communication. These indexical associations underlie an explanation of the effect that Jocelyn's linguistic accommodation had on her success in making business deals. This effect would not be possible, however, without the interlocutors' recognition and acceptance of the implied socioindexical values of "twang." Thus, one of the entailments of this metapragmatic construction is a cultural ratification of a socially "authenticating" (Bucholtz 2003) value attributed to "twang" in this argument.

This context of successful linguistic accommodation and sociolinguistic authentication is contrasted in Extract 3 with another communicative situation in which Jocelyn's use of "twang" leads to an opposite social effect of estrangement from Californians who started asking her "Where are you from?" This question signals to Jocelyn a perception of her use of twang as indexing outgroup behavior of somebody who is different and not "from here" (Myers 2006). Otherization implicit in this question is what makes Jocelyn conscious of the "twang" in her voice. The contrast created in Extract 3 between the social effects of using "twang" in different communicative contexts highlights the indexical associations and dissociations that characterize the metapragmatic functioning of "twang" in relation to perceptions of the social group membership of the interlocutors.

In sum, Extracts 2 and 3 rhetorically construct "twang" as a linguistic resource that was acquired in the childhood and can be used for different strategic purposes, both consciously and unconsciously, bringing about different social effects and evaluations. The cultural, indexical values implicitly attributed to "twang" in these conversational episodes can thus be seen in terms of the processes of sociolinguistic authentication that Jocelyn, who presents herself as a former "twang" speaker, had to go through to create a sense of belonging in different social situations while navigating the landscapes of linguistic difference by flexibly moving in and out of linguistic identities.

<div align="center">6.4 "Twang" and "Rednecks"</div>

The concept of "redneck" was first explicitly introduced into this conversation by the interviewer as part of a general question about the identity of hillbillies, rednecks, and hicks - the question which did not mention "twang." The episode in Extract 4 is one of the participants' answers to this question. This episode follows a short discussion of "Cowboy Talk" and its feature of vowel monophthongization in "oil" and precedes a discussion of the "Honey Boo-Boo" TV show whose stars are presented as "rednecks."

Extract 4

1   Joc: I think of Little ↓Dixie (.) as the ↓redneck. That's the most <u>southern</u> part of our=

2   Sha: Uh-huh

3   Joc: [=state, the most ↓opi]nionated, (0.3) the most ↓opinionated_ (0.6) ↓conservative, (1.2)

4   Jen: [and that's ↓Durant.]

5   Sha: Uh-huh

6   Joc: ↓prejudiced, (.) if you wonna say it_ (0.4) area of Oklahoma and that's I (.) put here_

7   (0.4) Large twang. (0.4) [Little Di]xie_

8   Sha: [and a lot,]

9   Int: In that area, ((*pointing to the map*))

10   Sha: A ↑lot of the- (0.3)

11   Joc: Durant [is where Durant **]

12   Sha: [falderal going on] down there.

          (0.6)

13   Joc: A lot of what,

14   Sha: Falderal.

		(0.8)
15	Joc:	Oh [hhe_ they also] are the most economically deprived. (0.6) in] the state.
16	Sha:	[((*chuckle*))] right] ∘uh-huh∘
17	Int:	∘Yeah.∘
18	Joc:	Uhm
19		(1.3)
20	Joc:	But it's ↑just so ↓sad but_ (0.6) the rednecks_ (0.9) they find something wrong=
21	Sha:	uh-huh
22	Joc:	=with everything. (1.2) other than themselves.

Extract 4 starts by identifying the Southeastern corner of Oklahoma as "the redneck" while referring to this area with a widely-used local term "Little Dixie" which evokes associations with the Southern culture. This rural part of the state is often singled out by Oklahomans as a linguistically prominent area distinguished by the use of stereotypically Southern speech characteristics. One of the Oklahoman participants in Bakos'(2013, 104) study, for example, described the Southeastern portion of the state as having "more of a hard drawl and twangy." Dialectological studies confirm non-linguists' evaluations by including the Southeastern part of Oklahoma into "the South" dialectal area based on both lexical (e.g., Southard 1993, 233) and phonological (e.g., Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006, 148) variables in linguistic production.

Jocelyn starts Extract 4 by saying "I think of Little Dixie as the redneck." Argumentatively, in this episode, Jocelyn and other participants co-construct a classification of this geographical area in terms of a social group identity of "rednecks." An argument from classification is usually (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008) "based on two main components: the description, or presentation, of the facts or events, and their classification, proceeding from properties presented in the definition itself" (67). The argument in this episode supports the categorization of "Little Dixie" as "the redneck" with a co-constructed definition including several characteristics such as the properties of the personae type (e.g. "opinionated," "conservative," "prejudiced" in lines 3 and 6, "find something wrong with everything other than themselves" in lines 20 and 22), economic status (e.g. "the most economically deprived in the state" in line 15), and characteristics of the speaking style (e.g., "large twang" in line 7 and

"falderal" in line 14). Inclusion of several properties into one definition establishes a relation of association between them whereby "twang" becomes indexically associated with several concepts deriving from geographical, social and linguistic domains of reference. Thus, the argument from classification in Extract 4 metapragmatically links these associations into a network of meanings that, in the view of the participants, define the social category of the redneck identity.

Categorizing "Little Dixie" in terms of the redneck identity establishes a spatial, cultural, economic, and linguistic differentiation of this particular area from other parts of Oklahoma. The linguistic expression of this categorization involves the repeated use of the superlative degree of adjectives ("the most opinionated" and "the most economically deprived") and degree modifiers ("a lot of" and "large"). This construction does not imply the exclusion of the redneck attributes from other areas of Oklahoma or other social identities. Rather, these linguistic choices contribute to construing the concept "twang" and several other proposed attributes of the redneck identity as gradient: a high degree of their presence within a group of people in a specific locale is presented as a characteristic feature of sociolinguistic distinctiveness.

Definitions, especially the ethical ones, "are rarely, if ever, argumentatively neutral" (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 67). Several attributes in the definition in Extract 6 are ethical and rely on the accepted systems of social values pertaining to a moral evaluation of personality traits. This definition includes a number of concepts with negative connotations. Jocelyn's expression of the affective stance of sadness in line 20 ("it's just so sad") explicitly marks her position with regard to the attributes of the redneck identity and assumes the unfortunate, undesirable character of this social, economic, and regional distinction. Inclusion of "twang" into a web of negative indexical associations reflects on the valorization of the term within this conversational context, in spite of the absence of explicit negative evaluation of this linguistic phenomenon.

According to Walton, Reed and Macagno (2008, 67), "argument from verbal classification proceeds from semantic, endoxic, or shared properties of a definition." In other words, in order for a classification to be accepted as valid and/or plausible, it has to rely on the shared popular opinion about the properties of the definition on which the classification is based. Furthermore, classifications and definitions are part of a more abstract level of conceptualization

based on explicit or implicit generalizations that may be linked to stereotypes (Walton and Macagno 2010, 54-55) of the underlying social structures, norms, and values. The association of "twang" with the "redneck" discourse which is co-constructed by the participants in Extract 4 rests on the assumption of the sharedness of the cultural knowledge schema of the redneck identity among the interlocutors and in the wider community. Thus, inclusion of "twang" into this schema metapragmatically indexes the cultural associations of this folk-term not only in the interactional space of this conversation, but also at the macro-level of the social context of language variation.

The association of "large twang" with the redneck persona should be viewed in relation to the macro-context of the wide circulation in the US society of the negatively-charged, contemptuous depictions of rednecks as ignorant, rural, poor, low-class whites who flout social conventions (Jarosz and Lawson 2002; Hartigan 2003) and resist "American mass society's insistence on conformity" (Cobb 2005, 226). It is important to consider a macro-social function of the "redneck" stereotype in delineating "a sharp division among whites, distinguishing those who are indelibly marked or unmarked in terms of class and region in relation to whiteness" (Hartigan 2003, 101). Concepts such as "redneck" serve as "boundary terms" (Wray 2006) while performing symbolic "boundary-work" (Lamont and Molnar 2002) in social differentiation between "lesser whites" and "an ideal type of whiteness considered untainted, normative and superior" (Shirley 2010, 57). Seeing our discoursal data in light of the social role of the concept "redneck" in the US suggests that different degrees of "twang" may have indexical functions in ideological demarcation of the differences among identities of white Oklahomans along the dimensions of social class, economic standing, persona and behavior type, regional affiliation, and social stigma.

In this conversation, indexical relations between "twang" and the social personae of low-class white Oklahomans are created repeatedly, albeit indirectly, and some of these discursive constructions integrate participants' individual experiences with language variety and their representations of the sociohistorical contexts of language variation, as shown in Extract 5 below. Here, the participants co-construct these representations as they draw on the social memory of the Dust Bowl experience. This episode immediately follows a discussion of whether Oklahoma English is a distinct variety – the topic raised in the interviewer's question.

Extract 5

1   Sha: ↑I don't think we stand out. (0.5) [and (.) particularly] our lang- a- our English.

2   Jen: [(***)   ]

3   Int: ∘Uh-huh_∘

4   Sha: Er (.) [like (***)]

5   Joc: [WE ↓DID] (0.4) We did. (.) When I first went to San Francisco right out=

6   =of Oklahoma_ (0.6) and that was the Oklahoma ↓twang.

7   Sha: ∘Uh-huh∘

8   Joc: [And people remember_   ]

9   Sus: [***I've never heard it call***] ↓twang.=

10   Joc: =Well_ (.) the people who went to (.) California back in the ↓thirties in the Dust=

11   =Bowl_ (0.9) took the Oklahoma twang ↓with them. (0.9) [and so we didn't think   ]=

12   Sus: uh-huh   [Good I'm glad they ***]

13   Joc: =[about it, (.) we] didn't think about it. (0.9) but ^later (.) when I went in_ (.)

14   Sha: [((laughter))   ]

15   Joc: fifty-^nine there were_ (.) people there who had ^known Okies, (0.5) ∘>then we=

16   = didn't like to be called O[kies].<∘ (.) But_ (1.0) they were ones who would=

17   Sha: [^No::]

18   =identify_ (0.4) the way I was speaking as ^Oklahoma (.) cause they heard what=

19   =they had heard in the thirties. (0.9)

((*57 sec. of omitted talk about "The Grapes of Wrath," about the author of the book, the actors in the movie and when it was last shown on TV*))

20   Sha: Well and they were not ↓treated well when they went to ^California (.) Everybody thought=

21   = they were-_

22   Joc: [Well they were talking about the language that was (***)] [and by the way_ (0.5)   ]

23   Jen: [They (***) (0.6) poor white trash.   ]

24   Sha: [(***) white trash (***)]

25   Joc: talking about the rednecks, (0.2) often they are considered_ (0.5) poor white trash. (0.2)

26   Int: uh-huh

27   Joc: Now if they are not ↓poor (.) they can be ↓rednecks.

In the context of talk about differentiation of Oklahoma English with regard to other varieties in the US, Sharon claims in line 1 of Extract 5 that the variety used in Oklahoma is not distinctive.

Jocelyn then responds by saying "We did" in line 5 which redefines the temporal focus of the discussion and frames it in terms of reference to the past. She identifies "twang" as a feature of the variety used in Oklahoma in the late fifties and supports this argument by an account of her experience with Californians who recognized Jocelyn's speech as characteristically Oklahoman – the variety that "the Okies" had brought to California during the Dust Bowl period. This argumentative move involves "twang" in discursive constructions with complex semiotic relations. A historical representation includes "twang" in the temporal and spatial domains of reference to the Dust Bowl period and creates a contrast between the Californian and the Oklahoman varieties. This contrast evokes a negative evaluation of "twang" in this episode in terms of the stigma associated with the undesirable attributes of membership in the social groups of "the Okies," "poor white trash," and "rednecks." Some of these negative evaluations are expressed directly in lines 16 ("we didn't like to be called "Okies") and 20 ("and they were not treated well").

Jocelyn's identification of "the Oklahoma twang" as a feature of the "Okie" variety lends credence to the macroproposition "Oklahoma had a twang," that she expressed and supported repeatedly in several other discourse episodes. While Susan occasionally opposes Jocelyn's claims about "twang," (as she does in line 9 of Extract 5, for example) the value of Jocelyn's arguments is augmented through their "convergence" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 471) on the same conclusion that "Oklahoma had a twang." Jocelyn reinforces this macroproposition by advancing different types of supporting arguments during this conversation – the arguments that draw on various types of evidence and several domains of meaning which include historical, social, spatial, temporal, and language-related representations. These arguments and the complexity of the semiotic spaces they engage highlight the role that a particular folk-linguistic concept may play in shaping language users' conceptions of language ideologies.

6.5 Folk Definitions of Twang

While "twang" is a commonly used term, in everyday conversations speakers often rely on the assumptions about the shared understanding of its meaning and do not normally discuss its definition unless directly prompted by the interviewer. In the conversation analyzed here, the interviewer asked the participants for definitions of the terms they were using (Extract 1, line 7):

"So what is a twang and what is a drawl?" Jocelyn's answer "It's when you make two syllables out of one-syllable words" (Extract 1, line 8) does not clearly indicate whether she refers to "twang" or "drawl." At the same time, she clearly distinguishes these terms as defining features of variation in Oklahoma and Texas. In a follow-up individual interview with Jocelyn, she gave the following definition of "twang":

Extract 6

1	Joc:	Since we ↑talked last_ (0.2) about the differences between tra- twang and drawl=
2		= I've (0.2) given (0.2) further thought <u>to</u> it. (1.0) because Oklahoma_ (0.6) people=
3		=who_ (0.6) recognize the sound of an Oklahoman (.) speech, (.) talked about the=
4		=Oklahoma (.) ↓twang. (2.5) In the South, they use a drawl. (2.2) And the twang,
5		(0.6) is a sound that_ It's almost nasal. It's a sharper sound (0.6) ((*clears throat*))
6	Int:	uh-huh_
7	Joc:	than you have in the normal South. (0.5) It's almost a shar- with a semi- twa-=
8	Int:	uh-huh_
9	Joc:	=with a semi-nasal quality. (0.9) And ↑many times in Oklahoma_ (0.2) it=
10	Int:	uh-huh,
11	Joc:	=included, (0.7) making_ (.)↑two syllables out of a one-syllable word.

In addition to the process of diphthongization which Jocelyn referred to during the group conversation, this definition of "the Oklahoma twang" includes voice qualities of nasality and sharpness of the sound. This reveals a complex, multidimensional perception of "twang" that integrates information about segmental and suprasegmental sound characteristics. Note that "nasality" is described in Extract 6 using a phrase "a semi-nasal quality": this word choice presents "nasality" as a scalar variable and entails a partial attribution of this voice quality to "twang." At the same time, the approximating degree modifier "almost" may evoke an "either-or" conception of totality (Paradis 2000, 148) which suggests an attempt to describe the voice quality associated with "twang" as similar to "nasality" but also in some way different from it.

"Sharpness" is constructed in this definition as a gradient phenomenon that is evaluated in comparison with "the normal South": "a sharper sound" differentiates "Oklahoma twang" as having phonetic characteristics distinct from the "normal" Southern variety. It is not quite clear, however, which phonetic parameters may correlate with perceptions of greater "sharpness" in

"twangy" speech styles. As for the perceptual meaningfulness of the quality "sharpness," it has been explored in psychoacoustic studies (e.g., Ellermeier, Mader and Daniel 2004; Fastl and Zwicker 2007) which suggest that "sharpness" is one of the most salient perceptual dimensions of "sensory pleasantness" of sounds, and these two constructs are inversely related: greater sharpness tends to be evaluated as less pleasant-sounding. If sharpness is indeed a phonetic cue of "twanginess," it may contribute to negative evaluations of "twang."

"Twang," in the data analyzed here, is often contrasted with "drawl" which is repeatedly defined by the participants as "a slower way of speaking" and "drawing out a word." However, according to sociolinguists' definitions of "drawl," it involves "the lengthening and raising of accented vowels, normally accompanied by a change in pitch […] but does not necessarily involve a slower overall speech tempo" (Montgomery 1989, 761). Feagin (2015, 359) has defined Southern drawl as "diphthongization of lax front vowels." "Twang," on the other hand, has been described by sociolinguists as a nasal manner of speaking (e.g., Jacewicz, Fox and Lyle 2009; Cukor-Avila et al. 2012). These specialist definitions do not seem to accurately reflect non-linguists' understandings of these folk-terms: our discourse data suggest that diphthongization of vowels and sharpness of the sound (which may be a perception of sharp changes in pitch) may be perceived as a feature of "twang" distinct from vowel elongation associated with "drawl." Another important difference is that "twang" is associated with a cluster of variables rather than "nasality" only. Future studies using both qualitative and experimental approaches may shed more light on how non-linguists perceive and conceptualize these salient folk-linguistic stereotypes.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This analysis suggests that "twang" has a complex socioindexical profile characterized by several value dimensions revealed in the local, rhetorical and interactional contexts of ideological constructions of social group identities and dialectal differences in American English. The language-related meanings of the folk-term "twang" revealed in the discourse analyzed here include a constellation of phonetic features, such as vowel diphthongization, sharpness of the sound, and nasality. These findings are in contrast with the sociolinguists' understandings of the term and highlight the importance of exploring the clustering of meanings in sociolinguistic indexical fields. As Tyler (2015) noted, "[i]ndexical fields may not be marked by a single core

meaning, but instead have multiple cores that result in clusters of meaning" (304). This study suggests that one of the approaches to the exploration of interrelations of sociolinguistic meanings is the analysis of the metapragmatic functioning of salient folk-linguistic concepts and their networks of associations/dissociations built in language users' own constructions of sociolinguistic indexical relations.

Constructions of "twang" discussed in this analysis rely on gradient conceptualizations of the social and linguistic features that become associated with "twang" through their inclusion in argument structures in everyday discourse. The rhetorical strategies of comparison and gradient representations (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 348) allow the speakers to establish more nuanced associations between the social and the language-related meanings of "twang" by placing them on pragmatic scales of interrelated conceptual hierarchies of values. Some of these values rely on assumptions about the "normal" social behavior that become linked to representations of linguistic stereotypes which serve to index symbolic boundaries distinguishing "untainted whites" from "lesser" forms of whiteness in the American South.

As revealed in this analysis, the discursive schemes of sociolinguistic valorization of "twang" are largely implicit. They are based on relating linguistic and social facts, behaviors and personae types to the values ascribed to them in folk rationalizations and typifications. The meanings constructed in such typifications are assumed to be shared and easily interpreted by the interlocutors. On the other hand, these meanings are contextualized through their embeddedness into the specific rhetorical and interactional contexts of communication.

One of the implicit valorization schemes revealed in this study includes the rhetorical construction of the "vernacular authenticity" (Coupland 2003) of "twang" in relation to several value dimensions including a positive value of solidarity and local group membership and negative evaluations associated with a social persona "redneck." These constructions of sociolinguistic authenticity are achieved with reliance on the indexical potential of "twang" to (de)authenticate social personae in terms of social group membership. These dimensions of the social meaning of "twang" have a macro-ideological function since they rely on a set of "enregistered" (Agha 2007) cultural conceptions about the clusters of social and linguistic features indexing group identities. The participants' concepts of "sociolinguistic authenticity" are thus involved in the interactional processes of self- and other-identification whereby speakers

construct authenticity in discourse based on the strategic and rhetorical deployment of reflexivity in discursive representations of social meanings.

This study also suggests that a qualitative analytical focus on the data collected from respondents with an ambivalent linguistic and regional identity can shed light on the complexity of the processes of sociolinguistic authentication (Bucholtz 2003) which can contribute to a better understanding of the concept "authenticity" and its role in the social functioning of language. Encounters with out-group members which occur after leaving one's "natural habitat" may heighten language awareness and stimulate reflexive reorientations in one's linguistic behavior and attitudes. As a result, such encounters and the social influences they involve may lead speakers to learn to flexibly manipulate linguistic resources available to them in new social and linguistic environments. These socially variable situations of dynamic identity construction may put language users at the forefront of the creation and renegotiation of the social meanings of language variation (cf. Eckert 2003, 393) which is an important factor in rehabilitation of such speakers from their marginalized status in sociolinguistics.

This paper has illustrated an analysis of the propositional nature of discursive representations of folk-linguistic concepts as revealed in the associational structures of informal reasoning and defeasible argumentation contextualized in interaction among participants. It has also shown that these propositional processes of sociolinguistic indexicality engage experiential, affective, performative, perceptual, and identity-related processes: participants demonstrate these interrelated engagements in everyday metalinguistic discourse when they rationalize, justify, valorize, and illustrate their individual experiences with linguistic variability. Through these processes, speakers appropriate the meaning potential of linguistic variables and conceptualize it in discursive constructions of linguistic distinctiveness. The nature of these different facets of socioindexical discursive constructions needs to be studied further for a better understanding of their role in language-ideological processes.

APPENDIX 1
Transcription Conventions

PII	personally-identifiable information omitted to preserve confidentiality
-	an abrupt halt, a cut-off, or interruption in utterance
=	latching: indicates the absence of noticeable silence between two turns or between parts of one turn
[talk]	overlapping speech
(***)	speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript
((*italic text*))	transcriptionist's description of events
bold text	a stylization, linguistic imitation, caricature
.	a falling intonation contour
,	rising intonation
Text_	level intonation
↑	sharp rise in pitch
↓	sharp fall in pitch
^	up-down variation in pitch
(.)	micro-pause
(0.2)	timed pause
text	emphasis
TEXT	especially loud talk
∘text∘	talk that is markedly quiet or soft
∘∘text∘∘	a particularly quiet voice, or whispering
@text@	a smiley voice
:	elongation of the preceding sound
<text>	slower or drawn-out talk
>text<	rushed or faster talk

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