Nonbinary speakers' rates of (ING) stable across conversation topics

Sociolinguistic research on trans speakers has tended to view them through the lens of adherence to cisgendered binary norms (Goldberg & Kuvalanka 2018). Speakers with identities outside the trans-and-cis-normative gender binary have, in turn, received very little attention (Bradford et al., 2019; Garmpi 2020, c.f. Zimman 2017).

Gratton (2016) provided an analysis of variation in nonbinary speakers' use of English suffixal (ING) (*workin'* vs. *working*). (ING) typically shows gendered production, with cis women producing higher rates of *–ing* than cis men (e.g., Trudgill 1974, Labov 2001). Additionally, (ING) is metalinguistically salient, making it a prime target for agentive sociolinguistic work. Gratton (2016) compared two nonbinary speakers' use of (ING) across two contexts: speaking with a friend vs. a stranger, and found that in the public setting, both speakers increased their rates of the variant *not* typically associated with their gender assigned at birth. Gratton analyzed this as an agentive "resistance to cis-normative femininity and masculinity", in response to a perceived threat of being misgendered as binary.

The present study builds on this work, by asking whether nonbinary speakers similarly change their rates of (ING) across conversation topic. 6 nonbinary speakers (3 AFAB and 3 AMAB), ranging from 21 to 27 years old, participated in sociolinguistic interviews (conducted by a familiar, nonbinary speaker) which were specifically designed to obtain participants' history of gender identity and expression in addition to traditional narratives. Interviews were coded for topic (*gender* vs. *other*). Results are shown in Figure 1 and Table 1.

We find that despite a markedly more deliberative style during *gender* topics, participants do not shift rates of (ING), supporting Gratton's (2016) argument that perceived threat of misgendering, rather than something like attention paid to speech, is a major motivating factor for shifting rates of (ING). We further find that speaker assigned gender at birth plays no predictable role in rates of (ING), suggesting that nonbinary speakers form their own linguistic community that operates outside of the gender binary.

	Est	SE	df	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.92	0.04	707.8	22.9	<2.00E-16
Style	-0.01	0.08	825.7	-0.18	0.85
AnR	-0.005	0.05	833.8	-0.11	0.91
GW	**-0.11**	**0.05**	**832.2**	**-2.344**	**0.02***
JB	-0.02	0.06	830.5	-0.285	0.78
JC	0.02	0.08	833.2	0.319	0.75
MS	**-0.21**	**0.05**	**832.4**	**-4.179**	**< 0.001 *** **
Style:AnR	0.01	0.17	816.2	0.044	0.96
Style:GW	0.06	0.09	830.9	0.591	0.55
Style:JB	-0.04	0.14	828.0	-0.286	0.78
Style:JC	-0.07	0.12	833.9	-0.576	0.56
Style:MS	0.01	0.10	827.5	0.061	0.95

Table 1: Results of mixed-effects model in glmr, with *Speaker* and *Topic* as main effects (reference levels: AmR and "non-gender topic") and a random intercept by word

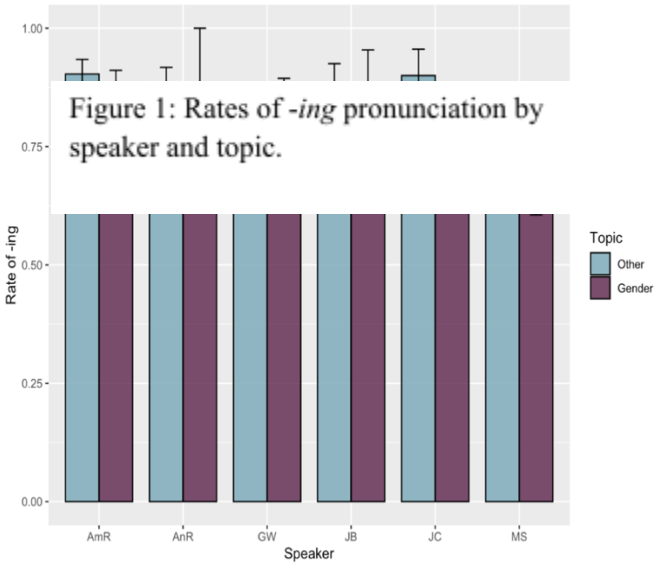

Figure 1: Rates of *-ing* pronunciation by speaker and topic.

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