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Notes, Phrases, and Clauses: An Examination of Identity in Music Focused Conversation

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NOTES, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES:
AN EXAMINATION OF IDENTITY IN MUSIC FOCUSED CONVERSATION

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Sociology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Sociology

By
Bryan Cannon

May 2013

NOTES, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES:
AN EXAMINATION OF IDENTITY IN MUSIC FOCUSED CONVERSATION

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I dedicate this thesis to my incredible wife Sara.

For the pushes when I needed them and patience when I needed it. But most of all, for those simple words of encouragement: “I’m proud of you.”

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I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis chair Dr. Stephen Groce for his continual support and patience as this paper has developed. His classes helped inspire me to enter and remain in the discipline of sociology. His continual support and enthusiasm helped inspire me to complete the project as well as helped to shape the direction it took.

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PREFACE

This thesis was developed based on the refinement of a simple question that came to me during my last semester as an undergraduate. I was thinking about the idea of music and “guilty pleasures.” The idea that there are musicians or genres people may like that they won’t necessarily tell others about. When I brought this idea up to Dr. Stephen Groce, he recommended broadening the idea. This led me to instead ask the question “What do people want their music to say about them?” Eventually, I settled on the even broader question: “How do people present themselves through their music preferences?”

Due to some of the ideas I had while brainstorming over how to study my original question, I decided to examine music and identity at the level of face to face interaction. The decision to focus on this level of analysis has expanded my understanding of the discipline and its versatility. I have greatly expanded my understanding of the concept of frame and been exposed to conversation analysis while working on this project. Both of these concepts have greatly influenced both my thinking and the current work.

The process of writing this thesis has not been without its setbacks. Issues with recruiting participants nearly left this work incomplete. I am indebted to those who chose to participate in the study and those that helped me recruit participants.

Without further comment, I submit this thesis in order to complete the Master of Arts in Sociology program at Western Kentucky University.

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Music is everywhere. From formal occasions to a person's morning run. Music is available on cell phones, computers, in religious ceremonies, at concerts and venues. Music is seen by society to be important and a person's choice of music can be used to present an identity. The question considered in this article is how people talk about music and how they present identity through their discussion. The current study examines eight focus groups of three actors instructed to simply talk about music. The discussions were recorded and analyzed in a conversation analytic style to identify the structures of the conversations and how these were used to present and regulate identity. Participants also provided background information about their music preferences and experiences as well as their goals in managing their self-presentation.

The results of the study focus on the general question of "What kind of music do you listen to?" and how participants managed their answers. Particular attention is given to actors' management of opportunities to create an in-group identification and avoid inference rich categorization. This study focuses primarily upon different ways this can be managed. Examples include three part list use, storytelling, subgenre specifications, and the use of phrases like "I listen to all kinds of music." It is argued that these devices can be used by an actor to present themselves as a member of the current in-group while avoiding being categorized in a possibly negative way based on their music choices.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Music is a defining element of character.” – Plato

In modern society, music is more prevalent than ever. Changes in technology have allowed music to migrate from the concert halls, churches, and live venues. As it stands, listening to music is possible just about any time. This is true whether you are at a wedding, funeral, in your car, or just walking down the street. The development of the radio, compact disc (and its predecessors), and finally the digital format (like the mp3) have allowed music to always be available to people. Practically speaking, people can have their own “soundtrack” to their everyday life.

As music has penetrated more aspects of everyday life, it has caught the interest of an increasing number of disciplines. Over the last few decades, psychologists have examined what a person’s music preferences say about them as a person (for examples see Cattell and Anderson 1953; Delsing, Bogt, Engels, and Meeus 2008; Litle and Zuckerman 1986; Rawlings and Ciancarelli 1997; Rentfrow and Gosling 2003). From a sociological perspective, this raises a question: If so many people are spending time paying attention to what our music preferences say about us as a person, how prolific is this idea in the culture at large? Presuming then that music preferences have something to say about who we are, another question comes to mind, “What do we want it to say?”

Many different kinds of music are available for the person to enjoy; classical, rock, country, rap, hip-hop, techno. Furthermore, each genre of music has subgenres. Actors have more options than ever before to tailor their music to their tastes, moods, and

identities. Websites like Pandora have been developed dedicated to determining and subsequently playing a person's preferred types of music. Yet beyond this type of medium, what else comprises a person's experience and use of music? What about the concerts they attend, or perhaps the instruments they play? What about how much of a background the person has in the playing of said instrument? All of this information makes up a part of a person's lived experience and can subsequently be used as part of an account or be used to convey personal experience that may be useful in social interaction. This brings us to the question: How do people use music in conversation to convey or create identity?

There has been a limited amount of research looking at the subject of music and identity. This research, as will be shown, establishes an excellent argument for the current research. One study focuses on music in interaction (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995), however, this work focused on interactions between interviewers and interviewees when a particular identity is the focus of the discussion. This paper is an attempt to expand research into the interactions between different actors by removing the formal interviewer from the equation and seeing how music identity talk develops between actors when they are more free to select the identity they make relevant. In the following sections, I will examine the literature on identity from the dramaturgical, ethnomethodological, symbolic interactional, and conversation analytic perspectives. I will then examine identity as it pertains to music including an examination of the perceived ties between the topics, frequency the topic comes up in conversation, and what is known of the inferences that can be made based upon musical preferences. The

final section of the next chapter will examine music and identity research from both social psychological and conversation analytic perspectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine identity as it presents itself in discourse on the topic of music. To understand this, it is important to comprehend identity as it pertains to discourse and how it pertains to music.

Identity

Identity has been described in multiple ways across multiple fields (for an extensive treatment of these models see Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995). In this section, I will pull from the conversation analysis and ethnomethodology traditions to describe a working model of identity to be used in analysis examining different levels and types of identity that can be used to examine discourse on the topic of music.

The Basic Assumptions

Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) identify a group of general principles that underlie this perspective as it relates to identity. These principles will form the backbone of the theoretical work on identity in this study:

- For a person to ‘have an identity’ – whether he or she is the person speaking, being spoken to, or being spoken about – is to be cast into a *category with associated characteristics or features*;
- Such casting is *indexical and occasioned*;
- It *makes relevant* the identity to the interactional business going on;
- The force of ‘having an identity’ is in its *consequentiality* in the interaction; and

- All this is visible in people's exploitation of the *structures of conversation* (pg. 3, emphasis in original)

Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) go on to explain these in more detail. The first principle 'categories with associated characteristics or features' builds upon Sack's (1989) own work in which he discusses the M.I.R. Device. He explains that this means Membership Inference-Rich Representative Device. He is describing the ability of a categorization to carry with it a set of expectations and understandings. In the current study, this would mean that the identity of "Bluegrass fan" would likely carry with it additional expectations concerning the characteristics of music one enjoys (e.g., banjos), but also other likes and dislikes as well.

The second principle 'indexical and occasionedness' points out that the interaction is interpreted in relation to the identity made relevant and that this interpretation is tied to the given situation at hand (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). In this case, if someone identifies as a person who likes dance music one may expect them to be interested in discussing the local club scene in that situation but not in a situation where their profession as an accountant is the relevant categorization.

'To make relevant and orient to' describes the agency of the actor in the choice of what identity is being used at a given moment. The basic idea is that the person chooses to orient to or make relevant the identity and subsequently the inferences made by others during a given situation (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). In this situation, it is the person that either makes relevant/orients to their identity as a country fan or as a rock fan and subsequently determines the inferences that can be made.

‘Procedural consequentiality’ points out that the identity presented must have a consequence in the conversation (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). For example, it is not appropriate to use race to explain a behavior in which it is not able to be shown as a relevant identity. Thus, the announced identity must be coherently framed within the situation and be consequential to the continuing interaction.

Finally, ‘conversational structures’ points out that identity is produced through our interactional normative behaviors and how they are used in the situation (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). Sack’s conversation analysis is built upon examining this last part. The current research pulls from this position and orientation to identity as something oriented to by both a speaker and a recipient.

Levels of Identity

In his chapter in Antaki and Widdicombe’s (1998) book *Identities in Talk*, Zimmerman (1998) discusses three different forms of identity that may or will be made relevant during a conversation. Zimmerman describes these forms as discourse identities, situational identities, and transportable identities. Discourse identities are those that focus on the role the actor is currently playing in the conversation (i.e., questioner, answerer, speaker, recipient, etc.) and the competencies required to fill that role. Situational identities are the identities that contain the underlying agendas relevant to the conversations and Zimmerman points out that these identities only come into play in certain types of situations. Finally transportable identities are those that are visible and latent in a given situation and “tag along” (pg. 90) through other situations. Zimmerman states that these identities are “usually visible, that is, assignable or claimable on the basis

of physical or culturally based insignia which furnish the intersubjective basis for categorization.” (pg. 90) These identities may not become relevant during a conversation, but are none-the-less present during them.

This model is promising, but the idea of transportable identities and situational identities can be folded into a single term as Wooffitt and Clark (1998) do when they use the term “social identity”. Wooffitt and Clark use the term to examine the maintenance and production of the identity of ‘medium’ as performed by a popular fortune teller. The difference between a discourse identity (one focusing on the action taking place within a given situation) and a social identity (a categorization based on extra-conversational knowledge) is enough of a distinction for the current work.

At the current point it has been established that identities are products of work performed by actors through the process of conversation by making reference to categorizations loaded with cultural information that can be made relevant by the actors. However, there are other items to consider when looking at the cultural information and how it is structured. The next section will discuss the concept of categorical knowledge as well as its role in defining the situation.

Defining the Situation

With one of the major important principles of Antaki and Widdicombe’s (1998) model focusing on knowledge outside the current situation it is imperative that attention be given to the importance of this consensus to the current question of what this information means to the group. The current section will discuss theoretical approaches

to the issue of consensus as it applies to society and to a given situation like that of a conversation about music.

The Nature of the Taken For Granted

The first theory that must be examined when discussing how people go about defining their situation is ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology has to do, in part, with the creation and understanding of interaction by actors in society and the taken-for-granted knowledge that is not stated during their interaction (Garfinkel 1967).

Here, how people create the taken-for-granted descriptions of what different statements about music mean is the topic of interest. Taken-for-granted knowledge could include the constellation of ideas that go along with an individual's announcements concerning music. The assumptions about what a person is like that can be deduced from simple, mundane information are the primary focus of this section. For example, one could assume that showing knowledge of classical compositions would signify affluence and wealth. These ideas and fill-in-the-gap type knowledge are often based upon previous information or experience (Garfinkel 1967). Each new experience changes the definition of each item in the set.

It must be noted that, just because a person is talking about a certain topic, does not mean that the topic is the main point of the conversation (Garfinkel 1967). A person could be talking about music but using this talk to announce what kind of person he or she is. This again ties into Sack's (1989) concept of the M.I.R. device, pointing out that actors rely on inferences to help understand their fellows during a given situation. This brings along with it the assumption that both people are "in" on the actual situation and

that their meanings for the different points of information are shared. In music talk, it is possible that the conversation is about more than just what concerts you have attended and what music is on your iPod.

The current study is designed to explore the idea that talk focused on music conveys information among actors - even those that may not know each other well. This information is about the speaker's identity in the situation, either for setting up a status hierarchy, describing the identity of the actor and what may be expected of them, or even pointing out an actor's group affiliations. A major thing to consider when talking about the current study is whether the information conveyed shares the same meaning across actors, in other words, whether there is consensus in meaning. Whether or not a consensus is present, the information a person has in her or his mind will set the stage for his or her initial portrayal of herself or himself and his or her perceptions of others as they work toward consensus in the definition of the situation and their role in it.

The Framing of the Situation

The next thing to consider is the situational setting. To understand this, the work of Goffman (1974) on the concept of frame will be used. In this work, Goffman describes the concept of the "frame." The concept of the frame is one that is not dissimilar to the concept of the definition of the situation developed by Thomas (1931). Goffman (1974), however, points out that a person's way of understanding the situation is not an internal but a societal matter. Subsequently, the way that a situation is framed comes from within the society and is used in a given situation. This recalls Garfinkel's (1967) stressing of the taken for granted. In a given situation, a person will most likely

attempt to follow a framework they previously learned and assume that this framework is also being followed by the others that are in the given situation. In music talk, we could say that the primary framework is that of conversation, with all of its subsequent rules and regulations in place. Yet there is likely, if one considers the importance of the additional information passed on by actors' announcements concerning their music interests, another framework in play guiding how an actor regulates information about their own identity.

Considering that there exist stereotypes (i.e., taken-for-granted knowledge (Garfinkel, 1967)) about people who prefer specific types of music (Rentfrow and Gosling 2007, Rentfrow, McDonald, and Oldmeadow 2009), it seems likely that these stereotypes are included as a part of any frame that focuses on conversation and the topic of music. While the taken-for-granted information within stereotypes held by people may differ across actors, it is likely that actors would believe their given stereotypes to be shared among those within their social worlds and subsequently interpret the sayings in the interaction from that standpoint.

Tannen (1993) points out the importance of frame to conversation and reiterates the point about societal expectations. She points out that people make sense of the world through connections and experience. Subsequently, people will make judgments about others based upon the information presented (through announcements, props, or actions) and what can be inferred through assumptions (stereotypes) based on those announcements, props, and actions. Tannen points to the early concept of schemas and our use of knowledge that already exists in our understanding of the world and how these concepts are very important to our interactions.

Tannen (1993) also expands Goffman's (1981) discussion of framing regarding his concepts of footing and alignments. Tannen (1993) discusses the concept of "knowledge schemas" (pg. 60), which she describes as the cognitive map of "participant's expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world, as distinguished from alignments being negotiated in a particular interaction" (pg. 60). So where alignments focus on the current interaction, knowledge schemas are more permanent cognitive structures, though as Tannen later points out, even they are dynamic. These elements tie in well with Zimmerman's (1998) concepts of identity as well as Sacks' (1989) concept of the M.I.R. Device that could use knowledge schemas as a resource for inference making while the alignments Tannen (1993) talks about tie in well with Zimmerman's (1998) situated identities in that they are identities aligned to in the current situation. As these are larger cognitive structures, it would not be a stretch to say that these knowledge schemas may be partially built out of stereotypes, being that stereotypes are in themselves a set of expectations about a particular group.

Corsaro's (1992) work on children's peer cultures and their importance to the socialization process further supports this way of examining interaction. Corsaro's work focuses primarily upon the peer cultures of young children and how their interactions with one another help socialize the children and help them develop into members of their society. The work focuses on the communal development of routines that allow them to interact with one another. Interactive presentation of identity would be a routine that would be developed and built into a frame. The use of knowledge schemas is already a part of the process as noted during his discussion of contextualization and contextualization assists in the use of framing, representing an actor's capability to take

the frame and considering “concrete features of interactive scenes.” This means that adjustments take place based on the situation and the primary framework provides the background for the routine currently being used (Corsaro 1992).

Consequently, I would propose to add this to a sequence that may make up a given person’s identity negotiation within conversation. In a given situation, an initial frame will be chosen by the actor to guide their interaction within a given situation. This frame may or may not be “keyed” (Goffman, 1974) and may change “keys” according to the way the interaction goes. When interacting with another person, an actor’s knowledge schemas will give them a general set of expectations about the other actors with whom they are interacting. The alignments between the different people engaged in the conversation may change as they “negotiate” their way through the interaction. Along the way footing may change based upon alignment, keying, or even the primary or secondary frame that is being used by a given member of the interaction. For example, a person’s footing may change if they are recognized as a person with more knowledge on the topic at hand. They could, perhaps switch to a more lecture style rate and form of speech, modifying their front stage behavior to meet with the other actors’ expectations for an informative bit of monologue in the middle of the dialogue. All of this would affect the routine in use while also reinforcing the identity that a person is presenting in a given conversation.

This section discussed the theoretical concept of frame and began to examine its use in conversation. The next section of this chapter will expand upon the uses of frame analysis in conversation as well as introduce the methods and ideas of Harvey Sacks. Using Goffman’s (1974 and 1981) treatment of the concept of frame and a published

record of Sacks' lectures (1989); I will begin to explore the ways this information can be used to analyze conversation.

The Issue of Talk

Examining everyday talk has been a focus of many different researchers within sociology. However, for this work, I will focus on the works in primarily two different micro-sociological theories. Primarily I will pull from dramaturgy and conversation analysis to answer the questions that are the focus of the current research. The issue here currently is discourse itself in all of its forms and what is known about it. This section is not designed to lay out all of the detailed information on the topic, but to give an overall view of the work done theoretically on the topic of discourse.

The Role of Frame

Goffman (1981) points out a connection to the frameworks applied to a given situation. This points out the ties to his concept of frame talked about earlier in the paper, as well as still pointing out how much speech is tied to its context. Sacks (1989) points out an important thing that would be tied to this bit of information; that being that we are practically "inference making machines" and that there are different mechanisms tied into conversation that allow us to function in this capacity.

This concept of the person as an "inference making machine" ties very well into the role of frame in conversation. As Garfinkel (1967) points out, we fill the gaps in the information given to us to make sense of our world. The concept of framing and all of its subsequent components as described by Goffman (1974 & 1981) create a tool set for analyzing how we make sense of conversation. The focus of this study is a specific

subset of this information; that being how we negotiate our identities in relation to those with whom we are conversing. Subsequently, the current study will rely primarily upon frame analysis and conversation analytic methods to develop an idea of how we negotiate our identities in conversation on the topic of music.

At this point in the investigations into the literature, proposing a few key points that inform the current study is possible.

1. Identity is constructed through and bound in an actor's interactions with other actors;
2. Actors possess a level of agency in developing and determining what categories are made relevant;
3. Identities are composed of 'inference-rich' categories drawn upon when an actor announces their affiliations and interests, making relevant a given identity;
4. These categorizations are consequential to the way that actors define and negotiate each other's identities within their continued interaction;

The Motivated Music Fan

While the actor has been given agency over what identity is and how it is being used, examining the actor as a motivated presenter of this information is also important. Sack's (1989) own lectures show that identity work is not just the labeling of those involved in an interaction but the use of the tactics of conversation to present a certain identity. The next section of this chapter will examine this topic and theories that can help explain this behavior.

The Musical Looking Glass Self

Presuming there is consensus in the meanings of words and ideas in the situation, it is important to look at how people will use this consensus. As noted in the first section of this chapter, this is a central tenet to a conversation analytic perspective. This can be shown through Cooley's (1902) concept of the "looking-glass self." According to this idea, we first learn to see ourselves from the perspective of the other person; we then determine how she or he is going to judge us according to this. Then we have a personal feeling based on this information. In the current case I believe that a person will look at his or her musical experiences from the point of view of the other person, determine how the person will evaluate her or his statements, and then develop a feeling in the situation according to this judgment. Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology would come up during the second part of this process. People will use the taken-for-granted information they have about what a given statement means to make their judgments about what the other person will think of them based upon their presentation of their musical ideas and experiences.

The Presentation of the Musical Self

Goffman (1959) believes that people present themselves differently in different situations. There is a front-stage and back-stage area. During a given situation, a person will present different things. The person will modify her or his identity according to the definition of the situation. In the current study this could be manifested by mentioning only part of his or her music preferences or experiences. An actor that enters an interaction may decide that one thing that he or she likes would not be received well by

the others in the interaction and she or he may “pass” by not mentioning this preference. He or she could also lie and state that she or he does not like the given type of music or knows nothing about it and hope not to be outed and discredited.

Moreover, a given person may also present himself or herself to have knowledge or interests that she or he does not have. The person may say, for example, that she or he likes classical music to appear affluent when in actuality he or she knows nothing about the topic area. The front stage behavior a person would present would change to lend authenticity to the announcement during subsequent interaction. This impression management will always change depending on the other actors in the situation and how the person believes the other people in the situation will react to his or her comments and actions. The identity one attempts to present will be based on their preconceived notions and, thus, his or her taken-for-granted knowledge. It is possible, however, that, through her or his interaction in the situation, the definition of the situation will change and her or his taken for granted knowledge will be put aside to take on a different set of definitions based upon the “working consensus” (Goffman 1959).

Dramaturgy, as shown through the previous statements, provides the backbone for the primary part of the information that will be gathered in this study. As the researcher, recognizing different things that occur during the exchanges will be important. Examining how people will check one another (looking for props or other indicators of authenticity), how they will cover when stigma occurs, and what front stage the person presents will be important (Goffman 1959).

When used with one another, these theories can be used to explain the interaction between different people. To summarize the believed process of events: an actor will perceive the situation from the other peoples' points of view, he or she will use their knowledge of the taken-for-granted she or he possesses to develop a value judgment from the perspective of the other actors, the actor will then have a reaction to his or her perceived reflection that will then allow her or him to create a front-stage persona that will get the reaction that he or she wants from others. Using these assumptions, it is believed that a person will act according to this series of events when talking about music. The current study plans to use these theories to look at what people do to create and maintain their chosen social identity when talking about music. This information supports an additional premise:

5. Actors are motivated agents in that they will attempt to present themselves in a positive light using conversational devices.

Hitting the Notes

Having established that identity is formed in discourse by using inference-rich categories, it is now imperative that it is established that music can be used as a topic to announce strategic categories. The following section will establish that music is a common topic of discourse during a time in which these categories are likely to be important to the development of opinions about a person. Then it will be established that young people believe that music can pass along information about the actor. Third, I will examine the type of information that music preference reports can create inferences

about. Finally, I will examine the current research on music in discourse and identity formulation among young people.

How Often Is Music Discussed?

The first study focusing on college students that will be discussed will focus on how often music is a topic of discussion for college students. This is important to examine because it will help establish the importance of music to young adults. In one study by Rentfrow and Gosling (2006), the researchers had pairs of people talk via a chat program across the Internet. These people did not know each other before the study began. In this study the researchers took the chat logs from each pair and looked at what the different pairs discussed as they got to know one another. The participants were given no instructions as to what to mention during their chat sessions. The people in the study talked about music more than any other topic measured in the study for five of the six weeks of the study. This study demonstrates that music is a major topic of discussion during the time in which people would be getting to know one another. Noting, as the authors did, that one topic that would be counted during the study was football is important. The study took place during football season at the University of Texas – Austin.

Why Do People Talk About Music?

The second point to bring up when reviewing the literature on college students has to do again with identity directly. More specifically, it deals with how music ranks in comparison to other activities/preferences regarding how much information it gives others about who a person is. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) demonstrated the importance

people put on music as a predictor of personality. In their research they performed a series of studies focusing on personality and music. The first study concerned people's beliefs about music preferences, discussing this topic can assist in explaining why the topic would be a common topic of conversation. When participants were asked whether a given thing or activity “said a lot about” (pg. 1238) them, music was rated very highly, holding a technical tie for the top spot with hobbies and a persons' bedroom. Thus, the people who participated in the study believed that their music preferences said just about as much about their personalities as the presentation of their bedrooms and knowing their hobbies would tell. This information seems to create a strong impression that people consider their musical preferences to be reflectors of their selves. When a question was asked stating that the given preferences “reveal a great deal about my personality” or “reveal a great deal about their personality” (pg. 1238) when referring to another person, the participants rated music as second only to hobbies in both cases.

The main point of relevance to the current study is in the fact that music preferences are perceived to say a great deal about a person. This would help explain why the topic was so commonly occurring in the zero acquaintance study cited earlier as it is likely that people were trying to convey information about themselves to others when they were first interacting with the person. This information could take many different forms whether it is information about an actor's personal traits, likes, dislikes, or group affiliations. The information could be used to pass along this information as well as create cohesiveness among the actors or provide a form of social currency useable during subsequent interactions.

Musical Stereotypes

The next major consideration and question that must be answered is what do young people believe musical preferences say about a person. Along with this information, it must be established that these stereotypes that go along with information on musical preferences are widely enough held and are consistent. Only if this knowledge meets the requisite of being consistent would it really be useful in conversation since people would have to assume that the information being passed on was being received in the manner in which it was intended. The current section will attempt to address these issues.

Most of the literature that I have found on the issue of musical stereotypes discusses music preferences and what they are believed to say about a person. Music preferences, which may rely on personal report, can convey two different kinds of information (Rentfrow, McDonald, and Oldmeadow 2009). The first kind of information relates to the social groups to which you belong and ones of which you are not a member. The second kind of information deals with personal qualities. For finding out whether there is, in fact, taken-for-granted knowledge that can be used to determine a person's qualities via music talk, the first place I looked was at the stereotypes people held about people who liked different forms of music. For this to be a good measure of perceived personal qualities there needs to be at least some measure of consensus among people about what the stereotypes are. The most recent article discussing stereotypes about music preferences and music stereotypes came from Rentfrow et al. (2009). In this study the researchers asked participants to rate what they thought people who listened to different kinds of music would be like. They did this by having them rate many different qualities. The ratings included the five qualities found in the Big Five personality

dimensions: extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability. They were also given a series of statements that included “descriptive adjectives and values,” (pg. 332). Along with these items were items addressing race, ethnicity, and social class. The types of music studied were classical, jazz, rock, electronica, pop, and rap. As the study was performed in the United Kingdom, the researchers focused on music types that are popular there.

Using a measure to determine inter-rater agreement, they yielded overall mean correlation scores for all of the genres. The largest consensus was about the type of person that listens to classical music (.50). Both rock music and rap music yielded correlations above .40 while the other genres rated between .25 and .31 (Pop and jazz music respectively). Using multivariate analysis of variance the researchers determined that the stereotypes were unique to each genre.

Rentfrow, et al. (2009) reported that both jazz fans and classical fans were rated high on scales of “Agreeableness” and “Emotional Stability,” however, the jazz fan was expected to be less “Conscientious.” Another comparison that the authors made during their analysis showed that people expected people who listened to classical music to be more intelligent. Among the socioeconomic status (SES) stereotypes, participants expected classical listeners to be primarily upper-middle class or upper class. Meanwhile, participants believed that rap listeners were mostly from the working and lower-middle class.

Rentfrow, et al.'s (2009) study was a continuation of a work by Rentfrow and Gosling (2007) that was a similar study in the United States done with 14 genres.

However, the 2007 study did not address racial or SES stereotypes. The two studies found similar levels of inter-rater consensus, with the second study having slightly higher levels of consensus.

Rentfrow and Gosling's (2007) study did measure several music genres. They also discussed a few additional areas of interest including stereotypes about drug use associated with different music genres. In this study consensus was highest for religious, classical, rock, and rap music in that order. Several stereotypes were discovered: People preferring religious music were thought to be conservative. Imagination and intellect are two qualities people associated with classical music listeners. Rock music fans are thought to be more likely to use drugs of all kinds except wine and cocktails. Rap listeners are thought to care more about social recognition than people who listen to the other forms of music listed here.

While stereotypes may not be accurate (and often are not), they are used by people on a daily basis; and generalizations about what people are like based on different bits of information do occur. These two studies show that there is at least some consensus about what different forms of music say about those that listen to them. While some types of music may be believed to say less, there are images of different music listeners.

The next section will examine other ways that the topic of music can be used to reference inference-rich categories. Pulling from the work of Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald (2002), this section discusses musical identities. Of particular interest is the distinction that Hargreaves, et. al (2002) between music in identities and identities in

music. MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) begin to define the concept of “musical identities” by introducing two types of interplay between music and identity; that being a distinction between music in identities (MII) and identities in music (IIM) (Hargreaves, et. al., 2002). IIM deals with “those aspects of musical identities that are socially defined within given cultural roles and musical categories. (Pg. 2)” Hargreaves, et. al. (2002) use the example of whether or not a person defines him or herself as a musician to demonstrate what this means. The other term, MII, describes “how we use music as a means or resource for developing other aspects of our individual identities (pg. 2).” This term is used to describe situations in which the musical aspect of an identity is subordinate to another construct when it comes to an identity. An example of this type of interaction would be gender identification and music.

The concept of identities in music also applies to the idea of ‘taste publics’, these being actors identifying with a specific genre or genres (Hargreaves, et. al. 2002). This type of identification with a given group would be passing on information about the individual through group affiliations. For example, if a person were labeled as a “Heavy Metal” fan, he/she may be expected to display additional traits included in the perceptions of authentic fans of that type of music.

Terrant, North, and Hargreaves (2002) point out that one possible reason for music preference displays would be to present identity information. They also point out that dislikes can be just as important as likes when it comes to establishing a musical identity. These authors even go on to say that they believe that one of the major appeals of music, when dealing with adolescents, relates to music’s “ability to help them form positive social identities” (pg. 139). They also point out that sociological research notes

that statements about music can act as boundary markers for group membership. Terrant, et. al. (2002) also point out that music oriented talk may send “meta-information” that can be used to make judgments. The authors go further and point out a discovery by North and Hargreaves (1999 in Terrant, et. al. 2002); that discovery being a process tying music to impression formation. According to Terrant, et. al. (2002) the study points out that adolescents may use their knowledge of social judgments tied to different forms of music to construct their self-image by identifying themselves to different kinds of music.

In additional research Terrant, et. al.’s (2002) focused on in and out group relations and how these were tied to six types of music. They had the participants rate an in-group’s and out-group’s liking for each type of music. They found that, for the most part, the participants seemed to rate their in-group as liking positively stereotyped styles of music and out-groups as preferring the more negatively stereotyped music. This study, along with two others helped Terrant, et. al. (2002) determine that music is used by adolescents to make social comparisons.

The work of MacDonald, et. al. (2002) and Terrant, et. al. (2002) helps establish an understanding of the association between music and identity. They also introduce a distinction that may be useful in analysis (being able to identify the difference between MII and IIM in conversation). The next section will look more closely at research with more similarities to the current research. The section will discuss the work of Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) and their focus on members of different music subcultures in early 1990’s Great Britain.

Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) examine the interaction between group identities and individual presentations in a way that connects and points out the way the former are presented in discourse. This serves as a strong bridge between the idea of the individual identity as it presents in conversation and categorical group membership. This book focused on a series of interviews performed with members of punk and goth subcultures in the United Kingdom during the early 1990s. Widdicombe and Wooffitt examined the interviews using conversation analysis and discovered different actions performed when members of the subcultures were asked questions about their styles and their involvement in their respective subcultures.

Widdicombe and Wooffitt's (1995) findings point out a large breadth of tactics used when people talk about music. Among the items examined are a resistance by some participants to being labeled as members of their subculture, attempting to be categorized as an 'ordinary person' while still maintaining their subcultural identity during complaints, and the use of biography to establish identity in music conversation. The work reveals the maneuvers used by the participants while their identity as a member of a certain subculture is made relevant. The current work approaches the issue from a different angle. In the current work, the participants will have more control over what identity is made relevant and orientated to during the conversation. While this may be a step backward in the process of this form of conversation, it is relevant to the understanding of musical identities since it will explore how they are made relevant by participants when they are not selected for their participation in the subculture.

Force (2009) also presents an aspect of music oriented interaction. Force's work focuses on interactions within the punk music subculture. For the current study, Force's

work gives examples of interactive maneuvers that may be used by different actors that are part of the same subculture. His work identifies three different comparisons used by members of the punk subculture to present authenticity. The three comparisons are: possession of certain goods, “stylized presentations of self,” and esoteric knowledge. Force notes that members of the punk subculture will often compare collections of records and notes that this is seen as more desirable due to the availability of other easier to collect mediums. He also notes, like Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) the importance of style and dress and how these props assist in the presentation of the punk identity. Finally, esoteric knowledge is presented as important to the generation of cultural capital within group since a greater amount of knowledge about a band and its members is seen to denote a greater commitment to the subculture and the bands that form the central hub for the community.

The final section of the chapter examined music and identity. The section has shown that music is a common topic of discussion among young people as well as providing evidence that it is assumed to be a source of inferential information. The section also provided some examples of what inferences can be pulled from music knowledge ranging from stereotypes to general group membership. The literature even argues that young people may use music to develop other aspects of their identities. The final section even provided evidence of musical preferences being treated as a source of identity relevant information. This section provides the last point that must be made:

6. Information about an actor’s musical experiences and preferences can provide inference-rich categorizations

In this section, I have explored the literature for information that will allow for the exploration of the topic of identity in music oriented conversation. The literature has provided six premises that are the backbone of the current research:

1. Identity is constructed through and bound in an actor's interactions with other actors;
2. Actors possess a level of agency in developing and determining what categories are made relevant;
3. Identities are composed of 'inference-rich' categories drawn upon when an actor announces their affiliations and interests, making relevant a given identity;
4. These categorizations are consequential to the way that actors define and negotiate each other's identities within their continued interaction;
5. Actors are motivated agents in that they will attempt to present themselves in a positive light using conversational devices.
6. Information about an actor's musical experiences and preferences can provide inference-rich categorizations

With these premises in mind, the next chapter will describe how data was acquired and examined to analyze identity presentation and negotiation in music focused conversation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND DATA

The current chapter explains the methods used to acquire and analyze the data. While not completely in line with the traditional methods used to collect data for conversation analysis, attempts were made to keep the methodology as close as possible while still being practical. The first section will describe the participants recruited for the study. The second section will explain the method used to collect the data. The final section will examine how data will be analyzed in brief.

Population

Participants were recruited in a small college city in the southern United States. Participants were recruited from sociology classes and a local business to participate in the study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 30 years of age. Twenty-four participants were recruited and grouped into sets of three for focus groups. Volunteers were overwhelmingly female making up 19 of the 24 participants. Group make up consisted of either all female (4), two females and a male (3), or two males and a female (1). The group make up was based on availability of the participants for group times and was not a factor in recruitment. With this acknowledged, invalidating the identification and analysis of conversational tactics used during the discussions is unlikely since the tactics may be used by either gender and gender was rarely an identity made relevant. Participants were encouraged to use alternate names to protect their anonymity and all names have been changed to protect the identities of the participants.

Procedures

The study contained three parts, a pretest, group interaction, and a post test. Each of these items is explained in detail in the following section. Each section of the study provided information for use during the analysis.

The pretest (see Appendix A) was administered either online before the group interaction or on paper at the time of the focus group. In both procedures, the existence of the pretest was rarely mentioned though it was referenced in a few of the groups. The pretest allowed for the collection of background information about a participant's preferences and experiences related to music. This was designed to serve as a glimpse into the participants back stage (Goffman 1959). This test asked questions about basic music preferences (the STOMP-R a revised version of the STOMP presented in Rentfrow and Gosling 2003), as well as asking the participant to report special engagements in music, including knowledge of instruments and concert attendance. The collection was used as a comparison when looking at what items were reported during the process of the actual interaction. By having a record of this information, the analysis can include outside the conversation knowledge that allows for the identification of omissions and tactics to avoid being placed in or omitted from a categorization.

The core of the study consisted of 30 to 60 minute focus groups on the topic of music. Focus groups were selected as the method of gather data due to the nature of the topic being examined. While music may be a popular topic of conversation as established in the previous chapter, examining the phenomenon in a naturally occurring situation as is the habit of a conversation analyst would be difficult. This is because the topic may come up during spontaneous informal conversations and would thus be difficult to pinpoint when they could be recorded and consent would be difficult to

acquire in the situation without changing the situation. Participants were given as little instruction as possible to allow for conversation to develop as close to a naturally occurring conversation as possible. Participants were instructed to “Talk about music...” and then left to perform the task. The administrator then left the room to avoid any attempts to gather information on what was desired by the participants. This forced participants to rely on existing frames to accomplish the task. After around 30 minutes, the administrator returned to present a task to the participants. The participants were asked to create a 20 to 25 song playlist as a group. Again, the instructions were left vague to allow the participants to determine how they were to go about the task themselves. The groups were audio recorded using a digital audio recorder. The conversations were then loaded onto a computer for analysis by the researcher.

After completing the playlist task, participants were given a final task to perform. They were asked to fill out a post test (see Appendix B) that asked questions about their prior knowledge of their co-participants as well as how they felt about the others in the group. They were also asked to talk about how they thought they presented themselves and how they had wanted to present themselves. This was done to attempt to gain insight into the motivations of the participants as well as how they perceived themselves and each other during the conversation.

This chapter examined the methods used to collect the data for analysis. The methods focused on gathering information that may or may not be stated during the process of the conversation as well as information relevant to the perceptions and motivations of the participants. This information was gathered to add additional depth to the analysis. The core of the analysis, however, is the focus groups designed to allow for

a close simulation to a regular conversation as it would be naturally occurring in a non-contrived situation. This data was examined using a combination of conversation analytic methods and content analysis to better understand the process of identity presentation in music oriented conversations. The following section will use this information and methodology to present the results of the examination.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Following the ethnomethodological tradition of conversation analysis and the premises presented during chapter 2:

1. Identity is constructed through and bound in an actor's interactions with other actors;
2. Actors possess a level of agency in developing and determining what categories are made relevant;
3. Identities are composed of 'inference-rich' categories drawn upon when an actor announces their affiliations and interests, making relevant a given identity;
4. These categorizations are consequential to the way that actors define and negotiate each other's identities within their continued interaction;
5. Actors are motivated agents in that they will attempt to present themselves in a positive light using conversational devices.
6. Information about an actor's musical experiences and preferences can provide inference-rich categorizations

The current chapter will discuss the findings of the study. To gain a full understanding of the situation and to adequately describe the proceedings, this chapter will begin by reporting information from the pretest and posttest. Then it will present general information on how the discussions developed that show the overall structure that could not be presented in an excerpt. The next section will further develop the basic

description of the situation by focusing on different normative practices in turn taking and topic broaching performed by the participants. The third section will examine some maneuvers performed by participants that deal with inference rich categorizations and the development of group cohesion usually presented in the early parts of conversations. Multiple transcribed sections will be used to demonstrate the maneuvers in practice and will be formatted according to the standard conversation analytic style to encompass and represent the conversation in the most accurate form (see Appendix C for a key to symbols used).

Pretest and Posttest Data

The pretest was designed to provide background information about musical preferences and experiences and the posttest was designed to provide information on how the participants perceived one another and what they wished to present during the course of the interactions. This section will briefly present information gained through this process.

Pretest Information

The pretest asked questions regarding the participants' musical preferences and experiences. The first section of the pretest consisted of Rentfrow and Gosling's (2003) STOMP-R and showed how likes and dislikes were distributed. Major relevant points to note are the most popular forms of music reported and the average number of preferences rated "like" measured as all genres rated 5 or greater on the 7 point Likert style scale used by the STOMP-R. There were 23 responses recorded (one participant failed to report their preferences under the same name as they used during the focus group and was

unable to be identified as associated with an online form). Participants also rated how important music was to them and reported any music related activities in which they participated.

The most popular genres recorded during the pretest were “Oldies,” “Pop,” and “Rock.” These three genres were rated as liked by 19 of the participants. Other notable categories were “Rap/Hip-hop” with 18 likes, “Soundtracks/theme song” with 17, and “Country” and “Alternative” with 15. These genres are all popular among the respondents, as well as commonly played on radio stations in the area (Country stations are prevalent in the area; Rap/Hip-hop music has a local station; Top 40 stations are likely to present songs from soundtracks as well as pop music, alternative, and rock music; and rock stations may include rock and alternative music). Thus local exposure is high for these styles overall and their play is commonly supported. These genres also presented themselves often during the conversations and often served as a primary topic of conversation.

Another notable point ascertained from the pretest was the number of genres rated as “liked.” The number of genres liked ranged from 5 to 18 of the 23 presented. The mean number of liked genres was 10.9 with a median of 11 and a mode of 8. The standard deviation equaled 3.49. This information is important to being able to examine claims of general interest and diversity in preferences since a claim to eclectic or diverse preferences would likely imply an inordinate amount of diversity in preferences.

Participants were also asked to rate how important they considered music in their lives. The average rating was 8.6 revealing that participants considered music an

important part of their lives. This response is expected based on Rentfrow and Gosling's (2003) study mentioned previously. Also of note is that the population overwhelmingly had experience making music. Twenty of the 23 participants reported some form of music experience. Here, music experience being defined as any time spent currently or previously singing or playing an instrument. Singing in the shower/car was not included in the calculation since this activity is unlikely to require training or practice beyond the act itself.

Posttest Information

The posttest showed that most participants found their fellow group members agreeable and "nice." Also, most stated that they desired to be seen in a positive light in accordance with Goffman's (1959) theory of face work. Most of the participants knew one another through classes and were at least familiar with one another before the focus groups. Sometimes, the participants were more familiar and were friends at the time of the focus groups.

Observed Behavioral Patterns

This section will describe some basic patterns that the conversations followed. It will focus on creating an outline of the general "feel" of the overall conversation through a short content analysis.

The first notable pattern is that most of the conversations followed a general-to-specific pattern, focusing on general preferences at the beginning of the discussion, then using the information gained during this to select some of the later topics. In essence, the

flow went from often starting out talking about genres to focusing on some of these genres later during the conversation.

This seemed to follow how identity was managed throughout much of the conversation. Sacks (1989) pointed out that M.I.R. devices are most commonly made relevant during the first part of a conversation. Since this may be the case, the analysis will focus primarily on the first part of the conversations. Often, there was a tendency to mitigate overall attachment to categorization outside creating a cohesive group atmosphere, focusing on presenting oneself as a member of a group with which the other members of the focus group could align. The later parts of the conversations seemed to focus more on details of preferences, like feelings toward types of performances or toward different artists. Much of the latter parts of the conversations fell into various forms that would fit well with Force's (2009) description of esoteric knowledge. Of note was a general focus on listening rather than making music (which was only discussed at length during one group).

This section was designed to give a general outline of the flow of conversation and when different styles of discussion took place during the groups. The next section will discuss turn order as it commonly appeared to set the stage for analysis of the conversations.

Turn Order

The importance of turn taking cannot be overstated. To examine the talk-in-interaction as it occurs it is first important to present the normative form of turn taking that occurred during the interactions. Many researchers have described the basic forms of

turn taking (see Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Goffman 1981) and pointed out basic expectations and maneuvers performed during conversation. In this section, we will refer to the movements and the discourse identities (Zimmerman 1998) held by different actors at different times throughout the conversation.

In the current study, the primary format followed by participants consists of a question-answer pair but the movement is expanded to contain all of the members of the group. Also, the questioner is expected to take a turn as an answerer. Thus, a series of discourse are often formatted ‘Question, Answer 1, Answer 2, Answer 3’. See excerpt 1 for an example:

Excerpt 1:

1	Q	Darren:	Is your taste in music the same as it was like growing up or ha- or do
2			you think your music taste has evolved? Do you think it’s like...
3			°y’know°
4		Alice:	I had the worst music taste g(h)row(he)ing up. Hehehe
5	A1	Paula:	Yeah mine has definitely evolved (.) I used to just listen to strictly::
6			hip-hop (.) and then as I grew up I started hanging with like different
7			crowds of people:: and started gettina taste of different things. (.)
8			Like I didn’t listen to country until I moved to Ke[(heh)ntuck(he)y (.)
9		Alice:	[hehehehehe
10		Darren:	[hehehehehehe
11		Paula:	like who you hang with and (.) where you live has a huge influence.
12	A2	Darren:	So I mines kinda somewhat stayed the same, I mean I was- I grew up
13			listening to country because... it’s not- I don’t think it’s- wull I guess
14			it could kinda be where I grew up because I:: I’m from Mississippi
15			and then I moved to:: Memphis and Nashville and, now I live in
16			↑Loui↓ville (.) and as I grew up I started like (.) hearing like (.)
17			different things that my parents would listen to like the rock and the
18			classic rock and then I’m like (syll) He[he
19		Alice:	[hhehehehehh
20		Darren:	So I think its kinda stayed the same↓ except that its expanded just a
21			little bit y’know?
22	A3	Alice:	Mine ↑kinda went in like a cycle ahh growing up my parents listened
23			to a lot of classic rock and that kinda what I was raised on, like the
24			first concert I ever went to was um an Aerosmith concert
25		Darren:	°oh°

26	Paula:	↑ni::ce
27	Alice:	yeah I seen them twice pretty much
28	Darren:	Uhhuh
29	Alice:	my biggest accomplishment in life [eh eh and a- and then (.) when I=
30	Paula	[heheh
31	Alice:	=was growing up I listened to really, <u>really</u> , dumb music I w- I- for
32		some reason in like middle school I really liked that whi::ne::y emo
33		music and then I grew out of that and kinda went back to (.) the
34		music that my parents listened to.

Granted, these are not the only actions taking place during this series of talk in interaction but the section presents the sequence as it normatively appears. The other points that appear include primarily short supportive utterances or short commentary supported with a full answer later (as is seen in line 4 going into line 22). Other times, the conversation may be a little more complicated but still follow the pattern:

Excerpt 2

1	Q	Erin:	Yeah, what kinda music d'you like? Besides the Little Mermaid?
2		Cody:	W(he)hy you gotta make [fun of the Little Mermaid?
3		Kim:	[gahehehe
4		Erin:	I'm not making fun of it it's just I've never heard anybody sing it like
5			you do I don't even know the words
6	Q	Cody:	Well why don't you go ahead and start
7		Kim:	How did I miss you singing [Little Mermaid?
8		Erin:	[What kinda music I like?
9		Cody:	Mmhmm,
10	A1	Erin:	Uhh, [I like some country (...)
11		Cody:	[yeah, (Syl syl)
12		Erin:	I like country, I like- I don't like the:: the::: uh::
13		Cody:	[Its ah:: what d'you mean by country?
14		Kim:	[Old school? Like the old school classic country?
15		Erin:	Like the old school clas[sic yes I like the newer country
16		Kim:	[yeah
17			Yeah
18		Erin:	I mean uh, I like Jodie Massena stuff like that she's not she ain't come
19			out with nothing but I like it so I guess a lil bit of whenever I was in
20			high school country till now, I like that, I like blu::es (.) I like
21			reggae=I really like reggae
22		Cody:	Oh yeah,
23		Erin:	I like um, obviously I like rap and hip-hop (..) ↑I:: I just like the

24		beats, I don't even listen to the words, I just like the beats
25	Kim:	Its cause you can't understand the words
26	Erin:	Ahehehehe Naw I can understand [em
27	Kim:	[hehehehe
28	Cody:	[I'm not- I'm not big on rap or hip
29		hop
30	Erin:	I'm just- I just like to dance and that's a good beat so that's why I like
31		it
32	Cody:	You look like a dancer
33	Erin:	And I like pop
34	Cody:	It depends
35	Erin:	Uhh:
36	Cody:	Yes
37	Erin:	I like movies, like soundtracks movies
38	Cody:	Straight
39	Erin:	Uhh I like- I like gospel
40	Cody:	Yeah
41	Erin:	Religious music like Christian music gospel music I like that (...)
42		think that's it=think that's all the genr-genres that I like.

During this excerpt, one participant's answer was given but multiple additional small turns were taken. During this interaction, the other turns at answering were similarly formed but all three do in fact occur and the topic remains relevant and all three are performing the same task: reporting their music preferences.

As can be seen during this section, turn taking occurs according to expected normative rules (as laid out in Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Next turn selection is performed primarily through self-selection with self-selection being the norm for the decision of who asks the next question.

Another format would often make an appearance in the conversations that being a statement-reply-reply model. This model was less prevalent than the Q-A1-A2-A3 model but its existence is notable:

Excerpt 3

1	Penny:	Um when I went to the All American Rejects show I caught a guitar
2		pick that was pretty cool.
3	Aaron:	[Oh uh, th-
4	Penny:	[Actually kinda like fell into my hands to be honest hehh it was my
5		birthday <u>and</u> he sang me happy birthday at the end of the show in the
6		back of the [(syll)
7	Aaron:	[When I was in- when I was in a::h
8	Penny:	°no camera°
9	Aaron:	Um::: when I was in Cheyenne for uh (.) uh Frontier Days=Cheyenne
10		Frontier Days it's like the only (..) thing that Cheyenne has going for
11		it, i- um::: they played um:: I think KISS showed up one year:: uh::
12		Kid Rock was there one year, um but I went to go see Rodney Atkins
13		and uh: he was=he was tossing out picks too, and I caught one, <u>that</u>
14		was an awesome [show
15	Marie:	[here's an embarrassing thing from my childhood, I
16		have a um:: drumstick from when I saw Good Charlotte↑ aheheh

In this section of talk, the first member refers to an item received during a show (a guitar pick) and then the other two members of the group respond with their own stories of collecting items at a concert (pick and drumstick respectively). In functionality, the system provides the same type of information and functions similarly to the Q-A1-A2-A3 format. In both cases, all respondents are given the opportunity to take a turn before a change in topic or a question that is not a follow-up question is presented. In this way, the statement-reply-reply format could easily have been formatted as a Q-A1-A2-A3 format where the question is understood. For example, adding a question like “Have you ever gotten a souvenir from the band during a show?” into the dialogue would provide the same information as the last excerpt. In this way, the format essentially follows the basic format of turn taking addressing a given topic or idea with a self-selected topic choosing position in between that can be combined with a statement or presented before the statement as a question. One thing to note with the use of a question is that it allows

an actor to select the topic while giving them a pass on being the first to present information that could be categorically relevant.

Some exceptions do occur during the talk in interaction. For example, sometimes no full response is given by a participant as happens in excerpt 3:

Excerpt 4

1	John:	What about um:: ah:: the big names, The Beatles?
2	Mara:	Love em.
3	Dave:	[(syl)
4	John:	[Hate ‘em
5		(.)
6	Mara:	[Really?
7	Dave:	[↑Really↓?
8	John:	I can be honest that they were influential [...]

In this instance, “Dave” does not take a turn in the proceedings that is audible (note line 3 which was unable to be heard due to talk over by “John”). Arguably, however, “Dave” makes his opinion on the topic known through his reaction to “John’s” statement in line 7 when he reacts by demanding an account in a rather accented manner. The talk was notably louder and the tone showed that the statement was not one expected. Thus, inferring that “Dave” disagrees with “John’s” position is possible.

This excerpt also presents another way that the expected proceedings may change during the conversation; that being when an account is required. When this occurs, the standard self-selection of turn taking stops and an account is requested by a participant. Note in the same passage that both “Dave” and “Mara” play the role of requestor to “John’s” account giver:

Excerpt 5

1	John:	What about um:: ah:: the big names, The Beatles?
2	Mara:	Love em.
3	Dave:	[()]
4	John:	[Hate 'em
5		(.)
6	→ Mara:	[Really?
7	→ Dave:	[Really?
8	John:	I can be honest that they were influential (account continues)

While occasional different formats occurred, most of the talk in interaction followed the previously mentioned format. This format was altered as needed to include follow-up questions and requests for accounts when needed, but as these are common alterations, they will not be covered at length in the current work. Focus will instead be on specific maneuvers that occurred during talk in interaction that played with the basic rules laid out previously.

This section described the standard format followed by the participants when discussing music in the focus groups. The next section will examine the most common single question asked during the group discussions and how it was answered.

Questions and Answers

With the normative turn order now described, examining the question-answer or statement-response sets that occurred during the talk-in-interaction is now possible. The analysis uncovered multiple patterns of both questioning and response that are relevant to the issue of identity formation and presentation during the proceedings. This section will examine both the questioning behavior as well as some patterns of response used by the participants.

The first part of this section will examine a common early question during the interaction. This question was “What kind of music do you like?” The question was formulated and presented differently but appeared in 6 of the 8 group discussions. The section will also examine other questions that appear during the first part of the conversation and how these questions assist in the creation of accounts for music preferences.

Reporting General Preferences

The design of the current study put the questioning into the hands of the participants. The interactions happened without overt manipulation from the researcher. This section will examine a common question that appeared near the beginning of many group discussions. The section will first examine the question, and then three forms of responses will be examined. The first is the use of a three-part list as explained by Jefferson (1991), the second maneuver is the use of storytelling as an account for explaining preferences, the final topic is the use of an appeal to general preference that allowed actors to avoid providing categorical information.

“What kind of music do you listen to?”

The first notable pattern to emerge was in the questions first asked by the participants to their fellow participants. Often, this question was a variation on “What kind of music do you listen to?” This question was often formulated without a specific reference to genres, while one group specifically asked for genre specifications:

Excerpt 6

1 Paula: So what's you guys favorite genres?

2 Alice: I like ah rock, specifically classic rock and punk rock.

Excerpt 7

1 Mary: What do- What types of music do you like Abby?
2 Abby: I like all music, just about

Excerpt 8

1 Erin: Yeah, what kind of music do you like? (..) besides the Little Mermaid
2 Cody: Why you gotta make fun of the Little Mermaid [for
3 Kim: [ahehehe

Excerpt 9

1 John: What kind of music do you listen to?
2 Mara: Umm[its
3 John: [that's a generic question right?
4 Mara: I know, I listen to everything really [uh: well I grew up on country
5 John: [yeah?

Excerpt 10

1 Paula: We::ll um, I don't know about you guys but aheheh I listen to music all
2 the time, and uh my favorites are like hip-ho::p, R&B, rap I dunno just-
3 but I also like country it jus depends on my ↑mood
4 Karen: I love country, I don't like rap musi::c
5 Paula: Really?
6 Karen: I really don't like (..) really for day to day stuff I don't really listen to
7 rap [...]

In 6 of the 8 groups, this form of question was asked or implied in the format presented during the last section. Also of note is the positioning of this question, which was often used toward the beginning of the discussion. This is in alignment with Sacks' description of the placement of a M.I.R. Device (Sacks 1989) in that he points out that these devices are best and most often used toward the beginning of a discussion. The answers to the question (or implied question) seem to point out that this is the appropriate time for

providing categorical devices also since the answers are usually in the form of genre specifications; even when genres are not specified as the preferred answer:

Excerpt 11

1 Paula: So what's you guys favorite genres?
2 → Alice: I like ah rock, specifically classic rock and punk rock.

Excerpt 12

1 → Paula: We::ll um, I don't know about you guys but aheheh I listen to music all
2 the time, and uh my favorites are like hip-ho::p, R&B, rap I dunno just-
3 but I also like country it jus depends on my ↑mood
4 → Karen: I love country, I don't like rap musi::c

In both examples, the speaker describes her preferences by making references to genre groups. The more telling of the two extracts is the second, where the first speaker uses categories automatically, without any type of directions to focus on music at this level. Also the specification of genre in the question by the questioner in the first extract points out that the speaker values genre related information.

This pattern presents an idea of the frame that is currently in use by the participants. Here, the understanding is that the question is one that will allow for participants to align themselves within the conversation to allow interaction to continue with little trouble. The use of genres at this point provides a resource for determining where the conversation can go and remain inclusive. The assertion that the participants were attempting to create a positive image is supported by the post-test statements. Overwhelmingly, participants stated that they wanted to seem nice and knowledgeable, this presents a motivation to have conversations focus on being inclusive as well as explaining why participants responded the way that they did to the question. The

proposition that the question allowed for the alignment of identities during the conversation also is supported by the fact that preceding portions of the discussion primarily focused on common genres and artists contained within these genres. Also, the only obvious instance of a person having to attempt to align with a genre rated as completely negative in their pretest occurred when this question was not part of the opening sequence. Unfortunately, the aligning allowed by this question leaves the researcher with only the one instance to examine of this type of aligning.

The request for general preference information has been discussed. The next part of the section will begin examining the some ways that participants responded to this question.

Lists in genre reporting

When examining the responses to the question of music genre preferences one of the most notable patterns in the response is the use of list:

Excerpt 13

1	Paula:	So what's you guys favorite genres?
2	→ Alice:	I like ah rock, specifically classic rock and punk rock.
3	→ Darren:	I have a very eclectic (.) [I like country, I like cla(heh)[sical↑, I like=
4	Paula:	[eh..
5	Darren:	=rock (..) ah it's like
6	Alice:	[hehe
7	Darren:	everything except hhhhhh (..) I can listen to rap↑, I just can't (..)
8		like, listen to it (.) all the time.
9	→ Paula:	Right (...) I like oldies like old r&b, hip-hop, rap (..) gospel (.) I like↑
10		some country (.) I like po::p, so (.)

Excerpt 14

1	→ Penny:	We::ll um, I don't know about you guys but aheheh I listen to music all
2		the time, and uh my favorites are like hip-ho::p, R&B, rap I dunno just-

Jefferson (1991) points out how a three-part list can be used to signify completeness. Often, groups of three preferences would be presented first and additional items added are treated separately. For example, examine the first excerpt above, Darren's first line collects three genres into a grouping "[I like country, I like cla(heh)[sical↑, I like rock (..)" treated as a set. Even more, it is used as evidence of the first statement "I have a very eclectic..." identity statement about his music preferences. When referencing his pretest, rock and country are noted as liked categories while classical is marked as "neither like nor dislike" while other genres were rated higher. Thus, the selection of this genre serves to make a complete list that can support his assertion of an eclectic taste. Also note that these are set off from his mention of rap later in the report. This list serves as its own section unrelated to the other claim of the ability to listen to rap on only some occasions. The formation of this as a three-part list presents the list as an inclusive whole not connected to the additional statement made afterward. In other cases, more than three genres are listed, but they are often produced in sets of three together. The other list in the same series creates a three-part list specifying oldies, country, and pop.

Usually, genre reporting did not include all preferences that were reported during the pretest phase of the study but a selected subset consisting of three or more items. The actual reporting of an exhaustive list was an odd case when answering the question. Jefferson's (1991) work on three-part lists helps explain that after a three-part list is complete, it can provide a transition relevant point. Here, this would mean that after

reporting three preferences a speaker is no longer obliged to answer the question further even if the answer is not complete in a factual sense. The invoking of this rule of conversation could allow participants to name off items that allow them to align themselves with the group while avoiding the risk of presenting a category that may exclude them from the group or warrant an account of their preference.

Jefferson's (1991) specific point on a three-part list does show through when looking at how the answers are formulated and spoken even when more than three genres are presented:

Excerpt 15

8 → Paula: Right (...) I like oldies like old r&b, hip-hop, rap (..) gospel (.) I like↑
9 some country (.) I like po::p, so (.)

(bold added for emphasis)

The bolded notation points out hesitancy by the speaker to complete the thought because it breaks the rhythmic rule of three. By setting the final point off, the three-part list can exist as its own point but it is still connected to the listing. This short break allowed the speaker to create a “complete” list while still adding in an additional point. The fourth point begins a second three-part list consisting of gospel, country, and pop thus adhering to the three part list sequence again. Finally, as with the other two members of the group Alice (line 2 of 1st excerpt) creates a three-part list by making a general statement of type then specifying two subcategories. This counts as a three-part list though two of the reported genres are just adding specifics to an initial claim.

Lists allow for those discussing music to find an adequate point of “completeness” in their statements even when not listing all genres for which they have a liking. Listing can also assist in the rhythmic flow of a conversation (Jefferson 1991) and

keep a statement from being seen as awkward or weak. Usually, lists of preferences in groups of three or more gain the perception of “completeness” based on Jefferson’s observations about lists although often actual preference lists are longer than three items.

Storytelling in preference reporting

Another notable occurrence in the answers given to the question of general preferences was the presence of storytelling as a mode of providing an account of a preference. In doing so, it is possible to explain a preference and the corresponding categorization as a fan of a type of music on defined terms. Most often, these accounts presented through stories are not requested but are voluntarily presented by the participant as they occur:

Excerpt 16

1	Mara:	I kno::w, I ↑listen to everything really (.) [I listen to ah (.) well I grew=
2	John:	[yeah
3	Mara:	=up on country
4	John:	Mhmm
5	Mara:	my m:om that’s all she listens too and then (.) u::m my mom married
6		my step da::d and they listen to like ra:p but I listen to (.) classical and
7		[...]

Excerpt 17

1	Jen:	I like- I like country: and (...) po::p and a little bit of alternative and I
2		really like classic rock (...) like the seventies and stuff [and I guess=
3	Kelly:	[mhmm
4	Jen:	=it’s my da::d n like cause that’s all we ever listened to when I was
5		younger but [now I (..) like[now I love it. So (...)
6	Kim:	[hehehh [yeah
7	Jen:	[umm,
8	Kim:	[so that’s what you grew up with
9	Jen:	yeah y’know I grew up listening to::: umm (...) Que::n and (...) ahh
10		Elton John n’
11	Kim:	I love Elton [John
12	Jen:	[Billy Jo:el n stuff like that. He he <u>loves</u> Pink Floyd but I
13		<u>can’t, I can’t, I can’t</u> do it

14	Kelly:	ah[hehehe
15	Kim:	[hehehe
16	Jen:	°like° I'm just like °I don't like this:°
17	Kelly:	[hehehe
18	Kim:	[hehehe
19	Jen:	and him and my brother, like try to force me though (syll syll) that's
20		awful umm::: but yeah I- I like I can pretty much listen to <u>anything</u> I
21		really don't I don't like rap (..) all that much (..) and I really don't like
22		heavy metal cause it just sounds like(...) hm my boy[friend used- my=
23	Kim:	[your ears just-
24	Jen:	ex-boyfriend, he used to listen to it and I called it his demon mu(h)sic
25		[heheh cause that's all it sounds like [it's just like
26	Kelly:	[heheh
27	Kim:	[awheh [I kno::w
28	Jen:	<u>Screaming</u>
29	Kelly:	Mhmm
30	Jen:	a::nd (.) its (.) like(.) oh I like a song that has a meaning too like(.) like
31		a story::

In both situations, the storyteller uses references to family members to explain their preferences and dislikes of different types of music. This can serve two purposes; as a preemptive presentation of account information that would lower the likelihood that the claim would be called into question and as a way to add additional information that can influence the inferences that can be drawn from the categorization. This could especially be true for familial references since exposure to a music type by family would preclude any interest in the music based on ideologies and behaviors of the regular members of the group of listeners.

Besides familial attribution, location is another cause that is often used to explain preferences:

1	Kim:	So:: I grew up on the oldies a::nd (City, State) does not have a classic
2		oldies station but I listen to 100.7 [like the radio station
3	Erin:	[okay↓
4	Kim:	Uh, it's like the 60's and the 70's and like the Monkees and the

5 Beatle::s
6 Cody: Mmhhh
7 Kim: Uh, it's just like what I grew up on and that's what I always resort
8 back to (.) li::ke (..) y'know if I put it on Pandora station it's on like
9 Unchanted Melodie::s er:: y'know that kinda
10 (1)
11 → It's what I grew up on n'the::n I listened to country when I first ↑came
12 ↓here to (State) so I guess I've been listenen to that a lot lately I can
13 [(syll)
13 Erin: [Is that only cause you:: moved to (State) you started listenen to it?
14 → Kim: We-well I mean like, I'm mean I'm from St. Louis and it's just strait
15 up ra:p n' [oldies
16 Erin: [So I would think that's what you would (syll)
17 → Kim: Yeah::: y'know so like I never like growing up I never heard proolly
18 one country song umm and so I started listenen to it when I came he:re
19 and I like it but there's some days I'll throw it on a country station

1 Kelly: A::nd before I got to (University Name) because I'm from Indiana I
2 never listened to country I hated it and ever sense I got here I actually
3 like it I've grown to really enjoy it
4 Jen: See I was the opposite like I gr- I loved country livin' in Seattle, that's
5 where I'm from and then when I moved to Nashville, like I got this
6 like, and it's totally opposite because I mean Seattle has this like (.)
7 grunge stuff from back in the '90s y'know when Nirvana was around
8 and everything like that we-we adore Kurt Kobain up there and like (.)
9 so I should have been into alternative there but it was like totally flip-
10 flopped.
11 Kim: Mm[hmm
12 Kelly: [yeah
13 Jen: I was- I was addicted to country: up there: and now when I came here
14 like I listen to all these alternative:: like kinda no name ba::nds

In these cases, we see two ways that location oriented storytelling can be used to present preferences and identity information. In the first, Kim invokes both a narrative association to upbringing and a storyline focusing on the discovery of a type of music based on location. In essence, this could be a presentation of openness giving an example of adapting to a new region and the popular styles of music in the area. Also, Kim identifies herself as a radio listener, which could be useful information when bringing up

other types of music common to local radio stations. The second excerpt presents similar adaptive abilities in preferences on Kelly's part. Jen, however, points out that she was drawn to music types that are not tied to location, presenting a more individualistic approach to music selection since she was drawn to country music in Seattle and alternative in Nashville.

In these cases, it is clearly a presentation of identity characterized by music in identities (MII; Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald 2002). Music is treated as subordinate to other forms of identity that may be presented using musical experiences. Kim presents an activity and also narrative on where she has spent her life, invoking categorizations based on location. Jen's presentation also provides information on where she has lived and invited inferences based on those locations as well as presenting herself as someone who "goes against the flow."

The use of storytelling to explain preferences allows actors to preemptively deal with the possibility of a requested account as well as possibly assisting in mitigating the effects of categorical relevant information inferences. These stories can also be used to present new information about the storyteller and their identity. In the examples we saw that the storytelling device could be used to present an adaptable style that is open to local preferences or it could be used to present an individualistic development of taste that ignores local popularity. The next part of the section will deal with a common form of response to the question of music preference and attempt to explain the uses for the response.

Appeal to general preference

This section seeks to explain a specific form of response that occurs when participants were asked about their music preferences. Here, the behavior is responding to a request for categorically relevant information with an answer that does not provide this information and does not prohibit the introduction of categorically relevant information later. Here, it is the response of “I listen to all kinds of music.” This response was used by at least one participant in four of the six groups that asked the question about music preferences and appeared in both of the groups that did not ask the question. First, this portion of the section will examine this type of response when given in the context of a question of preference, then we will examine its appearance elsewhere. The following excerpts are from the talk in interaction as it developed during this study. Following the pattern already presented, the question was asked early during the conversation and the responses followed the normative patterns already presented, but with the following responses:

Excerpt 18

1	Jen:	I like- I like country: and (...) po::p and a little bit of alternative and I
2		really like classic rock (...) like the seventies and stuff [and I guess
3	Kelly:	[mhmm
4	Jen:	it's my da::d n like cause that's all we ever listened to when I was
5		younger but [now I (..) like[now I love it. So (...)
6	Kim:	[hehehh [yeah
7	Jen:	[umm,
8	Kim:	[so that's what you grew up with
9	Jen:	yeah y'know I grew up listening to::: umm (...) Que:::n and (...) ahh
10		Elton John n'
11	Kim:	I love Elton [John
12	Jen:	[Billy Jo:el n stuff like that. He he <u>loves</u> Pink Floyd but I
13		<u>can't, I can't, I can't</u> do it
14	Kelly:	ah[hehehe
15	Kim:	[hehehe
16	Jen:	°like° I'm just like °I don't like this:°
17	Kelly:	[hehehe
18	Kim:	[hehehe

19 Jen: and him and my brother, like try to force me though (syll syll) that's
20 → awful umm::: but yeah I- I like I can pretty much listen to anything I
21 really don't I don't like rap (..) all that much (..) and I really don't like
22 heavy metal cause it just sounds like(...) hm my boy[friend used- my=
23 Kim: [your ears just-
24 Jen: =ex-boyfriend, he used to listen to it and I called it his demon mu(h)sic
25 [heheh cause that's all it sounds like=
26 Kelly: [heheh
27 Kim: [awheh
28 Jen: =[it's just like Screaming
29 Kim: [I kno::w
30 Kelly: Mhmm
31 Jen: a::nd (.) its (.) like(.) oh I like a song that has a meaning too like(.) like
32 a story::

Excerpt 19

1 John: What kind of music do you listen to?
2 Mara: Umm[its
3 John: [that's a generic question right?
4 → Mara: I know, I listen to everything really [uh: well I grew up on country
5 John: [yeah?
6 John: Mhmm
7 Mara: my m:om that's all she listens too and then (.) u:::m my mom married
8 my step da::d and they listen to like ra:p but I listen to (.) classical and
9 (...)

Excerpt 20

1 Paula: So what's you guys favorite genres?
2 Alice: I like ah rock, specifically classic rock and punk rock.
3 → Darren: I have a very eclectic (.) [I like country, I like cla(heh)[sical↑, I like=
4 Paula: [eh..
5 Alice: [hehe
6 Darren: rock (..) ah it's like everything except hhhhhh (..) I can listen to
7 rap↑, I just can't (..) like, listen to it (..) all the time.
8 Paula: Right (...) I like oldies like old r&b, hip-hop, rap (..) gospel (.) I like↑
9 some country (.) I like po::p, so (.)

Excerpt 21

1 Mary: (syll) what t-what types of music do you like [Abby
2 Julia: [wull
3 → Abby: I like↑ all music (.)
4 → Julia: Just about.

5	→	Mary:	Me too=
6	→	Julia:	= ((mmm)) I'm? (.) I'm very (.) I- I have a d-diverse (..)
7		Mary:	yeah=
8		Julia:	=uhhh (.) select[ion
9		Mary:	[collection=
10		Julia:	=collection of music yeah [but
11		Mary:	[(syll syll) selection
12		Julia:	but u::m (.) but there's some-I mean there's some more that I-I like
13			other more than others (.) like(...) °I dunno°=I guess I'ma very
14			alternative, laid back, folk type person
15		Abby:	Yeah
16		Mary:	Yeah
17		Abby:	I like folk, jazz, I kinda like old stuff
18		Julia:	yeah yeah (...) uhhh (...) I got (.) I mean I still listen to music that my
19			parents my grandparents listened to (.) and not (..) i-I feel like the::
20			the:: newer music is coming out is very (..) not musical

These excerpts provide an illustration of a specific form of maneuver that occurs in talk in interaction and allows for the manipulation of categorical knowledge. This maneuver is the ‘appeal to general preference’. What is being done is that a request for categorically relevant information is being responded to with the reply of what equates to “all of the above.” Essentially, this type of maneuver allows the actor to avoid giving categorically relevant information while still giving an accepted response to the question asked. The literature review pointed out that inferences can be made about a person based on their reported musical preferences. By asking what kind of music a person listens to, the questioner is requesting inference-rich categorical information. However, by responding with the statement that they listen to all kinds of music, the answerer is providing a ‘pass’ type answer. The answer avoids allowing the other members of the group to make inferences based on the person falling into categories while still answering the question of what kind of music they listen to. In effect, the answerer is refusing to commit to an identity based upon musical preferences.

While sometimes this maneuver may be performed without additional information, the excerpts provide an interesting addition that seems to come coupled to the maneuver:

Excerpt 22

1	Mary:	(syll) what t-what types of music do you like [Abby
2	Julia:	[wull
3	2→ Abby:	I like↑ all music (.)
4	1→ Julia:	Just about.
5	Mary:	Me too=
6	Julia:	= ((mmm)) I'm? (.) I'm very (.) I- I have a d-diverse (..)
7	Mary:	yeah=
8	Julia:	=uhhh (.) select[ion
9	Mary:	[collection=
10	Julia:	=collection of music yeah [but
11	Mary:	[(syll syll selection
12	1→ Julia:	but u:::m (.) but there's some-I mean there's some more that I-I like
13		other more than others (.) like(...) °I dunno°=I guess I'ma very
14		alternative, laid back, folk type person
15	Abby:	Yeah
16	Mary:	Yeah
17	2→ Abby:	I like folk, jazz, I kinda like old stuff
18	Julia:	yeah yeah (...) uhhh (...) I got (.) I mean I still listen to music that
19		my parents my grandparents listened to (.) and not (..) i-I feel like
20		the:: the:: newer music is coming out is very (..) not musical

Note the pairings of these two parts of answers to the question of musical preference. Of particular interest is the way that “Julia” is framing her response. She presents her musical tastes as diverse and then couples this with a list of two genres paired across a statement of a certain quality; that being “laid back.” Julia has just made relevant a positive association with the two genres in a statement that could have been made alone without the addition of the appeal to general preference.

It is also important to note how the claim compares with the genres reported during the pretest. The claim is not tied to an objective sense of genre likes. Of the six

mentioned participants, half reported several “liked” genres below the average (7, 8, 9; Darren, Mara, Jen), while the other half reported several “liked” genres above the average (13, 15, 17; Abby, Julia, Mary). This hints at the possibility that the response serves as a way to avoid having to present actual genre information, or at least that an actual breadth of genre preferences is not relevant to the usage of the claim.

This begs the question of the function of the preemptive maneuver to present as a person with open preferences. Here, it could be argued that the maneuver limits the inferences that can be made. Also of note is that the eventual report does not seem to contradict the earlier claim. It is framed in a way that says “I like all kinds of music, and here are my favorites among those.” This statement has a different impact than simply stating “I like this kind of music.” It serves to create a situation where her reported preferences can only give limited information. Since she has appealed to a preference for all kinds of music, inferring any information from her report would be difficult since different musical preferences may invoke contradicting expectations of personal qualities. This report also creates a situation where her preference report avoids the ability to place her in an “out-group” alignment with the other members of the focus group since while she may have a reported “exceptional preference” for alternative and folk, she presents an image that she can be included in any in-group discussion despite genre of preference.

The aligning with in-group function of the passing part of the maneuver is made even clearer in “Abby’s” use of the phrase:

Excerpt 23

3	→	Abby:	I like [↑] all music (.)
4		Julia:	Just about.

5 Mary: Me too=
 6 Julia: = ((mmm)) I'm? (.) I'm very (.) I- I have a d-diverse (.)
 7 Mary: yeah=
 8 Julia: =uhhh (.) select[ion
 9 Mary: [collection=
 10 Julia: =collection of music yeah [but
 11 Mary: [(syll syll selection
 12 Julia: but u::m (.) but there's some-I mean there's some more that I-I like
 13 other more than others (.) like(...) °I dunno°=I guess I'm a very
 14 alternative, laid back, folk type person
 15 Abby: Yeah
 16 Mary: Yeah
 17 → Abby: I like folk, jazz, I kinda like old stuff

In this instance, Abby was selected for “next turn” by Mary during the question. Abby reports a general preference and adds a three-part list (Jefferson 1991) after Julia reports her preferences and includes one of those preferences in her list in the first position. Here Abby is aligning with Julia’s preference for folk music. This creates an in-group alignment between the two focus group members based on their shared specific liking of the folk genre.

The final line in the sequence shown in Excerpt 21 shows that this is where the sequence transitions to the next with Julia moving on to expand on the topic of “old stuff” both aligning herself with oldies and closing this portion of the conversation. As noted in Sacks (1989), there are certain points where certain parts of a conversation are done. Sacks analyzes a way that a person can avoid giving his or her name by asking for a correction and indicating “trouble” where they would be giving their name. By closing out the conversation section, Julia changes the alignment from a gathering of inference rich category information position to one of discussing the musicality of newer music. In doing so, Mary is no longer obliged to also include a three-part list like the other two

participants volunteered. This points out that the pass can function to fill a person's spot in the cycle of turn taking during which an opportunity is made available to give this categorically relevant information and that the topic can then become closed without a request for additional information.

The positioning of the question itself is very relevant to the understanding of the purpose of the maneuver. As Sacks (1989) pointed out, M.I.R. devices are most often brought up early in a conversation. This timing allows for the conversation's participants to align themselves for the remainder of the conversation. However, if the question does not occur, claims to general preference can be used later without the question to present this form of ambiguity or possibly an openness to topic shifts to a new genre or grouping:

Excerpt 24

1	Aaron:	Like[
2	Penny:	[I listen to Switchfoot
3	Aaron:	I'm [so:: (.) musically diverse, like I'm one of those people that I can=
4	Marie:	[I've seem 'em three times
5	Aaron:	Like <u>li:gitimately</u> (..) listens to every [genre of music cept for like (.)
6	Marie:	[yeah
7	Aaron:	opera n like classicals [n stuff like that
8	Marie:	[that's
9		yeah that's pretty much how I am pretty much [that how
10	Aaron:	[but like (..) but I mean
11		like what Penny was saying y'know like (...) I- my phone, my other
12		phone has like has the blu::es it's got y'know, punk rock it's got
13		country y'know [like 90's rap I-I don't listen=
14	Penny:	[(syll)
15	Aaron:	=To any rap (.) unless [its
16	Marie:	[current yeah
17	Aaron:	unless it was like pre-99↓

Excerpt 25

1	Tonya:	But I'm very versatile cause I listen to everything too though like I'm
2		open to listen t'new music

3	Kristy:	Gi[r::l
4	Tonya:	[Because music (.) ((aaa)) °I listen to music everyday° like I have to
5		fore I go to bed, when I wake up, when I'm walking to class, I got my
6		headphones in like (.) [(syll)
7	Kristy:	[my roommate got mad at me yesterday.
8	Tonya:	Why.
9	Kristy:	cause I went from sangen some uh Beyon[ce::: to singing lady=
10	Tonya:	[ce:::
11	Kristy:	=antebellum,To sanging some go::spel like [they got real real=
12	Debbie:	[ahheheheh
13	Kristy:	ma:::d↓ and I had to leave(.) because I had too much ener[gy that's=
14	Debbie:	[gy
15	Kristy:	=[how I know I got to man- too much energy
16	Debbie:	[hehe

In both cases, the statement occurred later during the discussion. Both conversations had focused upon a few different genres throughout (punk, rock, and blues for the former; pop, hip-hop/rap, and a little country for the latter). In both cases, we see one member of the group asserting that another group named presents them as having a general preference. In both cases, another member of the group then claims the identity also. In the first case, the initial claimant continues to present another completed (three or more part) list and then presents exceptions to the rule. In the second excerpt, the secondary claimant then uses storytelling to make a claim to a general preference. Again, both cases lacked an opportunity to claim a categorical position during the beginning parts of the conversation, but the claim was made later when preferences reported began to expand and after at least some preferences had been established through talk of artists or concerts.

Noting that the use of this type of claim remains the same is important; it creates a situation where others involved in the situation are unable to use categorical knowledge effectively since the variety of preferences is too great. The claim of general preference

presents an idea in and of itself in that it allows the person to come across as open and inviting to any type of music. However, while it may also function to present this information, the claim presents many characteristics that show that it functions as a 'pass' in the turn taking sequence. First is the ability of the claim to be used in place of an inference rich categorization without authenticity checks being brought into play. Even single genre claims are subject to checks, while this maneuver seems immune to the request denoting a normative maneuver that allows the speaker to not be required to list their preferences nor even present one. Also, the function of reporting a true broad preference could be performed by listing, even a three-part list as discussed previously. Additionally, the claim is not tied to an objective liking of many genres. Finally, the fact that even when presented with contradicting information (like a report of not liking a certain genre or genres) actors will not call the claim to account, this seems to imply that the maneuver is normative and not subject to the same scrutiny as other types of preference reports.

Not just avoiding categorization

The answers to the question of general music preferences, however, did not only accomplish an avoidance or presentation of categorically relevant inference information for fellow participants to draw inferences about the speaker, but also helped allow for the creation of an in-group atmosphere that would allow the participants to continue the conversation as a group without "trouble" or a negative image of the other members. Observe the reported preferences in lists presented in the following extract:

Excerpt 26

1	Mary:	(syll) what t-what types of music do you like [Abby
2	Julia:	[wull
3	Abby:	I like↑ all music (.)
4	Julia:	Just about.
5	Mary:	Me too=
6	Julia:	= ((mmm)) I'm? (.) I'm very (.) I- I have a d-diverse (..)
7	Mary:	yeah=
8	Julia:	=uhhh (.) select[ion
9	Mary:	[collection=
10	Julia:	=collection of music yeah [but
11	Mary:	[(syll syll selection
12	→ Julia:	but u::m (.) but there's some-I mean there's some more that I-I like
13		other more than others (.) like(...) °I dunno°=I guess I'ma very
14		alternative, laid back, folk type person
15	Abby:	Yeah
16	Mary:	Yeah
17	→ Abby:	I like folk , jazz, I kinda like old stuff
18	→ Julia:	yeah yeah (...) uhhh (...) I got (.) I mean I still listen to music that my
19		parents my grandparents listened to (.) and not (..) i-I feel like the::
20		the:: newer music is coming out is very (..) not musical

(Bold added for emphasis)

As noted earlier, portions of the last person's report are included in the current report.

The use of the three part listings creates a presentation of completeness as noted in Jefferson (1991) but is not an exhaustive list of liked genres in any of these participants' cases. However, the choice to report these genres is in line with the posttest report from most participants that they wanted to be liked. Also, by focusing genre reports on previously reported preferences, an actor can help build a group setting. This type of cohesiveness work, however, can also present differently: commentary on another's preferences during the report.

Excerpt 27

12	Erin:	I like country, I like- I don't like the:: the::: uh::
13	Cody:	[Its ah:: what d'you mean by country?
14	Kim:	[Old school? Like the old school classic country?
15	Erin:	Like the old school clas[sic yes I like the newer country

16	Kim:	[yeah
17		Yeah
18	Erin:	I mean uh, I like Jodie Massena stuff like that she's not she ain't come
19		out with nothing but I like it so I guess a lil bit of whenever I was in
20		high school country till now, I like that, I like blu::es (.) I like reggae=I
		really like reggae
21	→ Cody:	Oh yeah,
22	Erin:	I like um, obviously I like rap and hip-hop (..) ↑I::: I just like the beats,
23		I don't even listen to the words, I just like the beats
24	Kim:	Its cause you can't understand the words
25	Erin:	Ahehehehe Naw I can understand [em
26	Kim:	[hehehehe
27	→ Cody:	[I'm not- I'm not big on rap or
28		hip hop
29	Erin:	I'm just- I just like to dance and that's a good beat so that's why I like
30		it
31	Cody:	You look like a dancer
32	Erin:	And I like pop
33	→ Cody:	It depends
34	Erin:	Uhh:
35	Cody:	Yes
36	Erin:	I like movies, like soundtracks movies
37	→ Cody:	Straight
38	Erin:	Uhh I like- I like gospel
39	→ Cody:	Yeah
40	Erin:	Religious music like Christian music gospel music I like that (...)
41		think that's it=think that's all the genr-genres that I like.

Here, “Cody” presents small, short commentaries throughout “Erin’s” report. Most of these statements provide Cody’s preferences compared with Erin’s. However, as it is Erin’s turn, Cody does not follow up with a long explanation of his own preferences. However, later, Cody’s own answer to the question of musical preferences reference genres like gospel and reggae that are shared while Kim’s answer primarily focuses on her experiences with rap and country.

Music and Activities

Another type of report that presented itself during the early portion of the talk in interaction, and sometimes during preference reporting was the reporting of when a type of music is listened to. This type of information can serve to narrow inferences made and assist in the identity establishing process.

Excerpt 28

1	Paula:	So if you're working out, what do you listen to? Country or (.)
2	Karen:	No I listen to ah: like (...) I guess more like hip-hop rap type stuff just
3		cause it's more like
4	Sarah:	Upbeat
5	Paula:	Yeah
6	Karen:	↑Yeah because like when you- when you're working out your bloods
7		just pumpin and
8	Paula:	Yeah
9	Karen:	I like the real like physical stuff where you're like (..) like kick boxing
10		type a stuff and you can't beat somebody up to [country mus[ic it's
11	Sarah:	[ahehehehe
12	Paula:	[yeah
		hehehe
13	Karen:	=just not the same thing

Excerpt 29

1	Cody:	I do a lot of um.. reggae's huge
2	Erin:	I love Reggae
3	Cody:	I guess- I really don't know if there's a genre for it but beach pop like
4		that just relaxing like chill y'know like Jack Johnson style?
5		[Y'know Jack Johnson?
6	Kim:	[yeah,
7		Oh yeah.
8	Erin:	Mhmm
9	Cody:	°aahh that style=of stuff° That's what I'm really into. Umm,
10		alternative stuff too Red Hot Chili Peppers are (.) big.
11	Kim:	Yeah
12	→ Cody:	Linkin Park when I'm (.) writing
13	Erin:	°I like them°
14	Cody:	Just because (...) the angry element to it, really helps me write I guess
15		(.) espe- ↑wull it depends on what I'm trying to write but y'know (syll)
16		you get upset and you're like (static no[ise) I need something
17	Erin:	[Yeah
18	Kim:	Yeah

In both discussions, an additional categorization has been brought into play by a reference to a preferred type of music. In the first excerpt, Karen's workout routine is made relevant by reference to when she listens to rap and hip-hop (a genre she had just reported not liking very much). The activity provides an explanation for her listening though she generally will not listen to that type of music. In the second excerpt, Cody makes relevant his writing hobby by connecting it with his liking and uses for Linkin Park. According to Rentfrow and Gosling (2003), hobbies are the one thing that college students rated as providing more information about them than their music. Here, actors are making additional inference rich categories relevant but only within the context of their musical tastes. This type of maneuver could serve as a repair like it did in the first example, or as a way to specify the use that a person has for a certain genre even when there is no request for a repair or account. Here, the music preference may be being used as described by MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell's (2002) concept of music in identities where a musical preference is subordinate to another inference rich category (like writer). In these cases, music is used with other inference rich categories to fine tune the impression being presented.

Requests for subgenre specification

The modern music world is diverse and includes multiple subgenres and types of music within a general genre. Sometimes, actors will request that another specify a specific subset of a music genre. There are multiple ways that subgenres are made relevant during discourse. Often, subgenres can be used to specify an item that can be included in later discourse or can they can be used to repair a disagreement during genre reporting:

Excerpt 30

12 Erin: I like country, I like- I don't like the:: the::: uh::
13 → Cody: [Its ah:: what d'you mean by country?
14 → Kim: [Old school? Like the old school classic country?
15 Erin: Like the old school clas[sic yes I like the newer country

In the current excerpt, Cody and Kim asked for Erin to specify “What kind of country” and later reported preferences for older country and oldies respectively. By asking about this specification, actors can determine if country is a topic that all can participate in discussing later during the conversation (helping maintain group cohesion during the conversation). This also presents an authenticity check by Cody and Kim during the first excerpt. By asking for more specific knowledge about Erin’s interests, it is possible to see if she truly has an understanding of the genre. As stated before the previous example, subgenre focus can also be used to initiate a repair when there is a disagreement about music interests:

Excerpt 31

1 Penny: We::ll um, I don't know about you guys but aheheh I listen to music
2 all the time, and uh my favorites are like hip-ho::p, R&B, rap I dunno
3 just- but I also like country it jus depends on my ↑mood
4 Karen: I love country, I don't like rap music
5 Penny: Really?
6 Karen: I really don't like (.) for like the day to day stuff I don't listen to rap
7 it's just not (.) [I don't know I used to but after (.) like I lived in=
8 Penny: [yeah
9 Karen: =Louisiana I guess the culture just like [changed me so I listen to=
10 Penny: [alright cool
11 Karen: =country music all the time
12 Penny I mean I'm from Georgia we still listen ta country and rap °and
13 everything°
[but that's just me
14 Sarah: [I listen (.) I listen to both, like when we work out I listen to rap all the
15 time and like I guess I have to be in a certain mood I guess for each
kind of music
16 Penny: [Yeah I agree
17 Karen: [Yeah when I work out I listen to more like rap=I just don't like the,

18		like the really like degrading like
19	Penny:	Yeah
20	→ Karen:	<u>That's</u> [what I don't like I can listen to the, like the other like hip-hop=
21	Penny:	[that makes sense
22	Karen:	=Type stuff

In this excerpt, Karen states that she does not like rap and receives a negative reaction from Penny. Karen then attempts to repair the situation by appealing to location as described earlier. Here the excuse is not accepted as adequate. The second attempt at repair isolates a specific form that is disliked and one that is liked. This attempt to repair the group dynamic is accepted, evidenced by Penny's final line "That makes sense."

Subgenres can be used to create in-group connections when general genre reporting is not successful. This often takes the form of a request by another actor or as a repair after receiving a negative response to a preference statement based on genres.

Dislike Statements

Dislike statements are the opposite of preference reports. However, they do not seem to have the same inference rich property since they do not invoke a specific set of inferences. They can, however, influence the development of an inclusive group for conversation:

Excerpt 32

4	Karen:	I love country, I don't like rap music
5	Penny:	Really?
6	Karen:	I really don't like (.) for like the day to day stuff I don't listen to rap
7		it's just not (.) [I don't know I <u>used</u> to but after (..) like I lived in=
8	Penny:	[yeah
9	Karen:	=Louisiana I guess the culture just like [changed me so I listen to country=
10	Penny:	[alright cool
11	Karen:	=music all the time

12	Penny	I mean I'm from Georgia we still listen ta country and rap °and
13		everything° [but that's just me

The dislike statement in line 4 initiates a need for an account that controls the conversation until its resolution. In other cases repair is done on the side of a person making a claim to liking the genre:

Excerpt 33

22	Erin:	I like um, obviously I like rap and hip-hop (..) ↑I:: I just like the beats,
23		I don't even listen to the words, I just like the beats
24	Kim:	Its cause you can't understand the words
25	Erin:	Ahehehehe Naw I can understand [em
26	Kim:	[hehehehe
27	Cody:	[I'm not- I'm not big on rap or hip
28		hop
29	→ Erin:	I'm just- I just like to dance and that's a good beat so that's why I like
30		it
31	Cody:	You look like a dancer

In this situation, one member of the group makes a short joke in response to an immediate disclaimer made by the person that preferred rap. Then the third member of the group states that he does not like rap. Erin then issues a repair by downplaying her interest stating that she only likes an activity facilitated by the type of music. In doing so, Erin presents an identity that is more in line with the other members of the group.

What seems to be the focus when answering this question is the inclusion in the group and acceptance. This is supportive of the idea that actors are motivated agents since they are showing a desire to fit in with the others in the group. This also helps explain the lack of requests for more information when a person uses the appeal to general preference to avoid categorical information, since saying that “I like all kinds...”

allows for the participant to potentially align with any type of music later during the conversation and thus guarantees that the participant is not going to be excluded from a topic that may come up or viewed as an outsider by the other two members of a given group of participants. The focus on in-group identity is also supported by the repair sequences presented when disagreement occurs. Simultaneously, attempts are made to avoid presenting inference rich categorizations and minimize their influence.

The current chapter has examined the talk in interaction data gathered by recording the focus groups and comparing it with the pre- and post- test data as needed. Several maneuvers have been identified that help establish identity during interaction focusing primarily on a question asked early in a conversation designed to gather categorically relevant information that can be used for inferences. The data has shown that there is considerable resistance to being aligned with one specific genre and the inferential knowledge that it carries with it. However, simultaneously, social identity work is being done to align the actor with the other members of the group. Thus, while the actor is resisting one form of social identity, they are working toward the development of another form of identity that of a group member in the current talk in interaction.

Consequentiality in Continuing Discourse

The initial alignment sequence is relevant due to its influence upon the remainder of the discussion. This is made evident by how the conversations continued once the initial aligning had been completed by a question like “What kind of music do you listen to?” The only notable point when a participant claimed a genre interest that did not

coincide with their reported preferences (presented a “like” when a “dislike” was reported) occurred when the initial aligning was not performed and the participants were not familiar with each other usually. As reported previously, there were two occurrences when participants did not begin the discussion with a question of genre preference. In the case where a genre was laid claim to that was not liked, the participants were not very familiar with each other, having only known one another through class. In the other case, the participants were close and interacted with one another regularly. In all other cases, the opening question assisted in directing the conversations and most conversation topics were aligned with discussing either genres liked by all members or answering questions for clarification on genres not well known by the other members of the group.

The discussions themselves followed previously reported patterns (Force 2009) especially the use of discussions on esoteric knowledge; discussing important events in the lives of the performers. Unlike with Force’s work, limited edition publications were not commonly discussed, but the size of one’s music library replaced such claims. Also, concerts were mentioned often as a form of status providing claim. Most often, these claims were made with storytelling and describing the experience of going to the concert.

The consequences of the initial aligning process are also shown in the way the participants went about the process of building their playlists at the end of the groups:

Excerpt 34

1	Karen	“Rumor Has It” frikken love that song
2	Penny	Uhh kay (...) do “Wide Awake” cause I’m in love with that song right
3		now. Gotta put uh “Boyfriend” on there
4	Karen	Um, y’know what? Justin Bieber, like I still think of him as like a little
5		kid=

6	Penny	=he is:
7	Karen	↑Yeah↓[but
8	Penny	[I- he- but he's grown up (heh)

The turn order sequence changed from the Q-A-A-A sequence used throughout most of the previous discussion and was replaced by the statement of a suggestion with the opportunity for commentary on a self-selected basis. This means that often a suggestion was made and then another suggestion was made for a song to be placed on the list. Often, a request was followed immediately with a justification like those seen in line 1-3 in excerpt 34. The suggestion process was often interrupted to perform other forms of identity work like that mentioned in Force (2009) or discussions of the artist like that shown above in the discussion about Justin Bieber. Other forms of identity work, focusing on hierarchy were also present:

Excerpt 35

1	Mary	You oughta know Alanis Morissette number one
2	Julia	Pbbttt
3	Abby	Hehehehe
4	Julia	Hold o:::n, °wh°-↑why you gotta make that one num[ber ↓one,
5	Mary	[come on cu::s
6	Julia	Hold up[let me finish writing the numbers? Jee[::ze
7	Abby	[cu::s
8	Mary	[(syl, syl, syl, syl, syl, syl,)
9	Julia	You wouldn't even know them if I didn't introduce her to yo[u
10	Mary	[I ↑knew
11		Alanis Morise[te
12	Julia	[no you didn't girl I've listened to her since the womb
13	Mary	Okay:: I knew her, you just reunited us together
14	Abby	Ahehehe

Here, Julia claims to have introduced Mary to Alanis Morissette's music. By doing so, she claims a stronger position in the fan group by having the knowledge first. The discussions also brought in discussions of esoteric knowledge and experiences like concert attendance to continue the identity work reported to occur in an in-group frame. Most of the suggestions were based on the genres discussed during the conversation and also focused on artists discussed during the remainder of the conversation. This section, where the group's frame would necessarily shift from a conversational model to a task oriented model still worked with the initial alignment framework provided during the previous portion of the conversation. This provides evidence for a premise presented previously, that being the premise that an identity made relevant by an actor must be consequential to the proceeding interaction.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Music holds an important position in modern western culture. With the advent of the portable music player, and even more recently, the internet and its ability to provide access to more and more music, peoples' ability to consume music has become nigh unlimited. The question that guided the current investigation was how music is used in conversation to present identity.

The literature provided six basic assumptions about social identity that informed the current study:

1. Identity is constructed through and bound in an actor's interactions with other actors;
2. Actors possess a level of agency in developing and determining what categories are made relevant;
3. Identities are composed of 'inference-rich' categories drawn upon when an actor announces their affiliations and interests, making relevant a given identity;
4. These categorizations are consequential to the way that actors define and negotiate each other's identities within their continued interaction;
5. Actors are motivated agents in that they will attempt to present themselves in a positive light using conversational devices.
6. Information about an actor's musical experiences and preferences can provide inference-rich categorizations

The first four assumptions were pulled from the work of Antaki and Widdicombe (1998). The first assumption pointed out the importance of conversation as a place where identities are created and maintained. The second pointed out that this is not a passive process meaning that the actors took part in generating their own identities during the conversations. The third point makes relevant the idea of inference rich categories, like stereotypes and other assumptions, and how an actor's understanding of these can influence how information is presented in conversation. The last point of these four points out that these formulations are relevant in that they are consequential to how the interaction proceeds. These principles helped establish the importance of conversational proceedings to the development and maintenance of identity.

The fifth point in the series tied in the early works of Goffman (1959) and pointed out another very important point. That point being that actors were motivated to present information based on the situation and used identity information in a way as to reach a certain goal; that goal being to present themselves in a favorable light. This meant that actors would not be likely to simply present factual accounts but would manipulate their accounts to present themselves in a certain way.

The final point was that music as a topic could be used to perform the task of presenting identity. The literature provided a robust collection of information that pointed out that this was likely, presenting information ranging from actors' expectations (Rentfrow and Gosling 2003) to an actual account of such presentations (Widdicombe and Wooffitt 1995).

These points were used to justify the current work as well as made manifest in the proceedings. The interactions showed actors making relevant identities through music interests. Actors aligned themselves based on music preference information and this information was used to guide the conversation topics. The posttest pointed out that participants did in fact have a motivation to present the information in a controlled manner rather than simply reporting factual listings and the pretest allowed me to examine these manipulations of information as they appeared even when they were primarily performed through the act of omission.

The investigation focused primarily upon the first part of each conversation and on how the participants presented social identities in preference reporting. The conversations revealed the negotiation of two distinct forms of identity presented simultaneously during the conversations. During a given conversation, the participants were both attempting to resist and control other members' access to inference rich categorizations, similar to the reported actions of interviewees in Widdicombe and Woofitt's (1998) study examining identity and resistance to categorization by members of youth music subcultures in the United Kingdom. In that study, participants in the focus groups often used techniques to avoid providing information on their chosen subculture. In the current study, participants often passed their turn when asked to provide inference rich categorizations, like music preferences, by stating that they liked "all kinds" of music. This gave the participants a pass on their answering turn and avoided being placed into inference rich categorizations. Simultaneously, participants aligned themselves with shared preferences to create a group discussion that was inclusive. In-group/out-group identifications were not avoided but instead were brought

to the forefront of the conversations. Sometimes, participants would appeal to a general preference then report preferences based on the preferences of others in the group.

Other more common tactics like storytelling and the three part list allowed participants to provide information while avoiding any stigma that could be tied to a certain categorization. Story telling allowed participants to generate an account that could minimize the actor's control over their preference while the three part list allowed participants to limit the breadth of their reporting by creating a controlled answer that was not all inclusive regarding their preferences. Finally, smaller reports like appealing to subgenres allowed actors to find common ground even when they did not align with their peers using broader preferences.

Important to the formulation of both an identity within the group and through inference rich categorizations was a single question asked early in most of the groups: "What kind of music do you like?" The answer to this question served both the purpose of creating an in-group while still allowing participants to avoid inference rich categorizations that could present them in a negative light. Furthermore, the general preference statement allowed participants to perform both tasks simultaneously. The response of "I like all kinds of music" allows the actor to avoid being placed into an inference rich category since different genres are tied to different expected qualities (Rentfrow and Gosling 2007, Rentfrow, McDonald, and Oldmeadow 2009) while maintaining the ability to be considered an in-group member when discussing any type of music. This question's positioning in the proceedings is also of import. By positioning this question at the beginning of the conversation, actors could avoid any type of trouble or exclusion during the proceedings. This stands as a testament to the power of

conversational order and actors' taken for granted knowledge of how to proceed. In fact, the positioning of this question allowed most participants to avoid a form of trouble and face work that could have appeared later during a conversation and only did if this question were not asked. Since the alignments had been performed and an understanding of what topics would be inclusive had been solidified, there was little need later for individuals to attempt to align themselves to groups to which they did not belong to maintain an in-group position.

Terrant et. al.'s (2002) study pointed out that adolescents expect their in-groups to like positively stereotyped music and out-groups to like negatively stereotyped music. This could help explain the usage of the appeal to general preference since passing on reporting until such a time as a genre is made relevant in the conversation as a topic, a participant can comment on the type of music and thus be seen as a member of the same group as their fellow participant. This would in turn invoke positive categorizations by the initiator of the dialogue on the topic thus providing for inference rich categorization to take place, but from a position where the person attempting to present a positive identity would not be vulnerable to negative assessments since they are aligning themselves with the preferences of the other actor(s).

The post-initial alignment discourse showed many signs of identity work discussed elsewhere (see Force 2009). The participants discussed esoteric knowledge on the topic of artists, as well as made relevant their collections of purchasable goods (song libraries). They also discussed concerts and shows that they had attended in a similar manner, though these were usually backed up with stories about the event. These discussions focused on genres held in common during the initial preference reporting

when it was performed and avoided “trouble” situations where a member may be outside that group due to the use of an initial alignment process. This focus provides more evidence for the consequential nature of the initial alignment process.

The importance of this examination is clear when examining the modern social world. Music is everywhere and plays a part in many different aspects of people’s lives. Research has shown that people believe that the music a person listens to is believed to say a lot about the identity of the person. Understanding how people negotiate positive identities when talking about the subject becomes important since people treat music preferences as inference rich categorizations. In a time when much of a person’s time is spent consuming music and it remains a major topic of discussion among youth when they are beginning to interact with one another, understanding how young people use music to present social identities is beneficial to the understanding of everyday interaction. The current study’s treatment of this identity development builds upon existing work and opens considerations about how actors develop identities during conversations in the post-industrial society where the consumption of products like music is a daily activity. The importance of managing how an actor is viewed by his or her peers cannot be overstated and with music and other consumable forms of culture being so closely tied to how actors define themselves, seeing how its use expands beyond the mere listening to music is important.

The current study examined how actors align themselves to be a part of a group during an interaction and how this work is performed collaboratively. The work of creating a positive identity is not just the work of the actor who holds the identity but a task undertaken by the group. The current study demonstrated the importance of not only

answers and alignments generated but of the questions themselves and their role in generating a situation where actors can interact and maintain positive identities.

Limitations

The current study was limited in multiple ways that may be addressed in further research. The first limit was population. The study could benefit from a larger population that could reveal more patterns in talk. Also, due to the informal nature of music oriented discussions, the study had to be performed in a contrived environment. While every attempt was made to create as close of a simulation as possible, the recorder and contrived circumstances were mentioned occasionally by the participants meaning they still framed the situation differently than they would a normal informal conversation. Furthermore, there was no way to determine what leads to music focused conversation nor was there the possibility of new actors entering or current actors leaving the conversation. Finally, the study could benefit from a more representative gender distribution. While some groups consisted of all females, there were no all-male groups. As noted earlier, however, gender was not made relevant during the conversations though this does not exclude the possibility of normative differences in patterns of talk.

Future Research

Future research on this topic could expand the population and thus the ability to find patterned questions and responses throughout the conversation. Since the diversity of questions during the interactions increased with time, the later parts of the conversations were not as patterned as the beginning with the number of groups available for the current study. More participants would allow for more patterns to be revealed.

Also, an examination of this topic with considerations being given to gender could be beneficial. Another area for further study would be to examine other forms of media for identity work. In a postindustrial society that focuses on consuming, other forms of media may present similar patterning, leading to a greater understanding of not only interaction but also of the ways that media influence how we present ourselves in modern everyday life.

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Appendix A

Pretest

STOMP-Revised

Please indicate your basic preference for each of the following genres using the scale provided.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Dislike Dislike Dislike a Neither like Like a Like Like
Strongly Moderately Little nor dislike Little Moderately Strongly

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ Alternative | 13. _____ New Age |
| 2. _____ Bluegrass | 14. _____ Oldies |
| 3. _____ Blues | 15. _____ Opera |
| 4. _____ Classical | 16. _____ Pop |
| 5. _____ Country | 17. _____ Punk |
| 6. _____ Dance/Electronica | 18. _____ Rap/hip-hop |
| 7. _____ Folk | 19. _____ Reggae |
| 8. _____ Funk | 20. _____ Religious |
| 9. _____ Gospel | 21. _____ Rock |
| 10. _____ Heavy Metal | 22. _____ Soul/R&B |
| 11. _____ International/Foreign | 23. _____ Soundtracks/theme song |
| 12. _____ Jazz | |
24. On average, how many hours do you listen to music per day (round up to nearest hour)?
25. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being very important and 1 being not important at all, how important is music to your life?
- Why?
26. Please list all concerts you recall having attended in the last 5 years.
27. Do you watch music videos?
- a. Online?
 - i. What sites?
 - b. On television?
 - i. What Channels?

28. If yes to 27, please specify the genre(s) of the video(s).

- 29. _____ Alternative
- 30. _____ Bluegrass
- 31. _____ Blues
- 32. _____ Classical
- 33. _____ Country
- 34. _____ Dance/Electronica
- 35. _____ Folk
- 36. _____ Funk
- 37. _____ Gospel
- 38. _____ Heavy Metal
- 39. _____ International/Foreign
- 40. _____ Jazz
- 41. _____ New Age
- 42. _____ Oldies
- 43. _____ Opera
- 44. _____ Pop
- 45. _____ Punk
- 46. _____ Rap/hip-hop
- 47. _____ Reggae
- 48. _____ Religious
- 49. _____ Rock
- 50. _____ Soul/R&B
- 51. _____ Soundtracks/theme song

52. Do you currently.... (please check any that apply)

- a. Play an instrument? _____
 - i. Please specify instrument: _____
 - ii. How long have you played? _____
- b. Sing? _____
 - i. Choir? _____
 - ii. Solo Performance? _____
 - iii. Karaoke? _____
 - iv. Religious Service? _____
 - v. Other? (please specify) _____
- c. DJ? _____
- d. Play Rockband/Guitar Hero style games? _____
 - i. What games? _____
- e. Play in a band? _____
 - i. Garage Band? _____
 - ii. Local Performing Band? _____
 - iii. Church Band? _____
 - iv. Other Band? (Please Specify) _____

53. Have you previously spent time doing any of the following?

- a. Playing an instrument? _____
 - i. Please specify instrument: _____
 - ii. How long did you play? _____
- b. Singing? _____
 - i. Choir? _____
 - ii. Solo Performance? _____
 - iii. Karaoke? _____
 - iv. Religious Service? _____
 - v. Other? (please specify) _____
- c. DJing? _____
- d. Playing Rockband/Guitar Hero style games? _____
- e. Playing in a band? _____
 - i. Garage Band? _____
 - ii. Local Performing Band? _____
 - iii. Church Band? _____
 - iv. Other Band? (Please Specify) _____

54. Does anyone in your family play a musical instrument? If so, what instrument and how long have they been playing?

55. Did they perform as part of any group of musicians or as a solo performer?

Appendix B

Posttest

Please list your ID number: _____

Please list the IDs of the other members of your group: _____ &
_____.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Specify which other group member you are commenting about by filling out the space for each ID.

Group member #1

ID: _____

What did you think about this person?

Why?

What do believe this person thought about you?

Why?

What did you want them to think about you?

Why?

Did you know this person before the focus group today? If so, for how long?

Group Member #2

ID: _____

What did you think about this person?

Why?

What do believe this person thought about you?

Why?

What did you want them to think about you?

Why?

Did you know this person before the focus group today? If so, for how long?

Appendix C

Transcription Key

The transcriptions presented in this paper use the style developed by Gail Jefferson. While some variations on the technique do exist, this paper adheres most closely with that used by Antaki and Widdicombe (1998).

(.) (..)	These symbols represent approximately timed pauses lasting from the shortest audible pause to about half a second to about a second respectively.
(...)	
(1)	Pause timed in seconds
Heheh	Laughter syllables that attempt to provide description of laughter
(h)	Laughter within words
Abo-	Dash shows self-interruptions or cut off sounds
Ro::ck	Stretched Syllables, more colons mean greater stretching
() or (syl)	Unclear speech
=	Used to connect two words that have no space between or to connect two sections of a continuous stretch of talk when a need for overlapping talk notation required the splitting of a single statement
↑↓	Rising or falling intonation
?	Rising tone at the end of a statement
.,	Natural endings or comma like pauses
<u>Underline</u>	Underlining indicates emphasis by the speaker
CAPS	Notably louder talk
°quiet°	Degree signs surround notably soft talk
Over[lap [boo	Brackets used to note overlapping talk between two speakers
→	Lines of notable interest addressed in text.
[...]	Omitted continued material
