Corresponding Author Email ID: morgan.carrieann@gmail.com

]AT[**Post-socialist language ideologies in action: Linking interview context and language ideology through stance**[1]

]Running header: POST-SOCIALIST LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION[

]AU[**Carrie Ann Morgan**

]AFF[*University of Michigan, U.S.A.*

]RULE[

]ABSTEXT[Changes associated with the post-socialist period in Albania have complicated the legacy of language ideologies grounded in Ottoman-era and socialist-era politics. In this article, I analyze two metalinguistic interviews with young adults in the Albanian capital of Tirana in order to investigate the status of standardizing and anti-standardizing language ideologies while also raising a methodological question regarding interview context and researcher role as persistent issues in sociolinguistic research. As acts of evaluation, language ideologies can be linked to interactional positionings and alignments via stance, which is significant for understanding aspects of identity and context in the interview. I argue that this framework provides a better understanding of interview dynamics than previous style shifting approaches, as

any explanation of differences in interview interactions must simultaneously consider macro-level influences of ideology and micro-level interactional developments.

Ndryshimet e periudhës pas-socialiste në Shqipëri e kanë ndërlikuar trashëgiminë e ideologjive gjuhësore të bazuara në politikat e periudhës osmane dhe të asaj socialiste. Në këtë artikull, unë analizoj dy intervista metagjuhësore me të rinj në kryeqytetin shqiptar, Tiranë, për të hetuar statusin e ideologjive gjuhësore standardizuese dhe jo-standardizuese, ndërkohë që ngre edhe një pyetje metodologjike në lidhje me kontekstin e intervistës dhe rolin e hulumtuesit, si dy çështje gjithnjë të pranishme në hulumtimin sociolinguistik. Si akte vlerësimi, ideologjitë gjuhësore mund të lidhen me pozicionimet dhe rreshtimet ndërveprimore me anë të qëndrimit (*stance*) dhe kjo është më rëndësi për aspektet e identitetit dhe të kontekstit në intervistë. Argumenti im është se kjo kornizë analitike shpjegon dinamiket e intervistës më mirë se qasjet e mëparshme të bazuara në ndërrimin e stilit (*style-shifting*) meqenëse çdo shpjegim i ndryshimeve në ndërveprimet gjuhësore gjatë intervistës duhet të mbajë njëkohësisht parasysh ndikimet e ideologjive në nivelin makro dhe zhvillimet ndërveprimore në nivelin mikro. [Albanian]

]KEY[KEYWORDS: Language ideologies, stance, interview context, standard language, Albanian
]RULE[

]A[**INTRODUCTION**

]fo[Important questions that arise in relation to language ideologies are how they are expressed in different contexts and what social and interactional functions they serve. To address these issues, I draw a connection between language ideologies and stance through their mutual grounding in acts of evaluation. Stance theory (e.g. Du Bois 2007) shows that evaluations are implicated in processes of positioning and alignment. Thus, language ideologies viewed as the evaluative vector in stance acts are also implicated in these interactional activities. Bringing this insight to the context of the interview, I demonstrate that language ideologies are fundamentally interconnected with interpersonal negotiation of participant and researcher roles and context through stance. Consequently, I argue that stance provides us with a better understanding of linguistic performances in the interview than previously proposed style shifting models (e.g.

Schilling-Estes 1998; Wertheim 2006). This is particularly pertinent as stance, especially in its relation to style, has become increasingly important in studies of sociolinguistic variation (e.g. Jaffe 2009), but it has not yet been used to address the interview, a persistent methodological issue in sociolinguistics.

]p[I situate this theoretical concern within the sociolinguistic context of Albania, where linguistic division and language standardization are informed by the politics of nation-state development throughout the Ottoman and socialist-eras of the 20th century. During the post-socialist period, the dominant politics have been challenged by popular debates about the status of Standard Albanian and increasing dialect contact as a result of urban migration to the capital city of Tirana, where I situate my fieldwork. Despite the sociolinguistic interest of these circumstances, the limited research on Albanian sociolinguistics has generally focused on issues of contemporary and historical standard language planning (e.g. Byron 1976; Ismajli 2005; Lloshi 2006; Marashi 2011; Munishi 2013). Largely absent from this literature is a tradition of critically examining language ideologies in relation to empirically observable linguistic practices. Thus, this article investigates the understudied sociolinguistic context of Albania while bringing it to bear on the role of language ideologies and stance in the interview context.

]A[**IDEOLOGY, STANCE, AND THE INTERVIEW CONTEXT**

]fo[Although it appears under various labels (e.g. 'evaluation', Du Bois 2007; 'propositional stance', Lempert 2008; 'affect', Kiesling 2011), evaluation is central to conceptions of stance. Meanwhile, valorization is an important feature of language ideology as politically and morally interested rationalizations and representations of language in society (e.g. Silverstein 1979; Woolard, Schieffelin and Kroskrity 1998; Gal and Irvine 2000). Thus, a connection between stance and language ideology emerges along the axis of evaluation. Evaluation, however, is only one of three vectors of action in Du Bois' (2007) stance act, which posits that stance subjects evaluate stance objects, positioning themselves with respect to those objects and creating degrees of alignment with other subjects. In this way, the logic of the stance act allows us to connect language ideologies to interactional activities of positioning and alignment through evaluation. Du Bois's approach proves particularly useful for a stance analysis of language ideologies as explicit metalinguistic discourses where speakers, as stance subjects, provide propositionally explicit evaluations of language, as a stance object. However, metalinguistic discourses are only

one of two recognized sites of language ideology, the other being implicit linguistic practices (Woolard, Schieffelin and Kroskrity 1998: 9).

]p[Kiesling (2009) demonstrates that stancetaking also occurs through the use of sociolinguistic variables, whose meanings are implicit rather than propositional or explicit (Eckert 2014). Kiesling (2015) thus argues that Du Bois's emphasis on explicit evaluations may not capture the role of sociolinguistic variation in stance. As a result of this observation, he expands upon Du Bois in ways that are important for a stance analysis of implicit language ideologies. First, he proposes that stance evaluations are directed at a stance focus, which encompasses figures or ideas represented in discourse rather than just objects of evaluative verbs. By removing the requirement of an overt stance object, Kiesling enables sociolinguistic variables to serve as implicit evaluations of language. Furthermore, Kiesling argues that stance involves the epistemic strength of an assertion, or investment. Language ideologies involve evaluations, but we must also consider how invested speakers are in those evaluations in order to understand their relevance for issues of alignment and positioning.

]p[Two additional features of stance, dialogic context and sociocultural field (Du Bois 2007), likewise help to address challenges of implicit language ideologies. Lempert (2008) shows that degrees of structural parallelism frame lexicogrammatical markers of epistemic stance, reflexively serving as indexes of interactional stance and complicating any clear division between these two types of stance. Applied to lexicogrammatical sociolinguistic variables, this insight suggests a consideration of how different speakers do or do not align in the variant of a sociolinguistic variable they use across turns in dialogue. Additionally, Lempert (2008: 585) notes that in the case of stance, 'event-independent "cultural" presuppositions … risk escaping attention because they are not empirically manifest in transcripts.' While cultural presuppositions are important even for the interpretation of explicit metalinguistic discourses, they are particularly crucial for the interpretation of sociolinguistic variation's fundamentally non-propositional meaning.

]p[Building upon Ochs' (1992) concept of indirect indexicality, Kiesling (2009) argues that because the interactional stances conveyed by sociolinguistic variables are linked to broader social identities (e.g. motherhood, masculinity), the sociolinguistic variable also serves as an indirect index of those identities. Like social identities, language ideologies can be indirectly indexed through the use of sociolinguistic variables inasmuch as they are the cultural knowledge

that enables the interpretation of directly indexed interactional stances (e.g. the use of a sociolinguistic variable to create humor implies a particular valorization of language). On the other hand, because language ideologies themselves are an evaluation of linguistic forms or varieties, their indirect indexing simultaneously implies a stance of its own. Jaffe (2009: 13) draws attention to this layering of stances with her observation that the use of a stigmatized variety together with a more formal one may be 'an individual claim to specific social membership(s) and authority, an act of interpersonal positioning, and a political and ideological statement about the status and relationship of the codes in circulation (the language chosen and the language not chosen)'. In this sense, stance theory allows us to see the way in which language ideologies, as both explicit and implicit evaluations, are implicated in positioning and alignment, an insight that has important implications for the construction of roles, identities, and context in researcher-participant interview interactions.

]p[A number of scholars analyze the relationship between researcher-participant interview interactions and linguistic practice through the lens of style shifting. Wertheim's (2006) work on Tatar-Russian bilingual code-mixing shows that where consultants ideologically align with a discourse of purity that construes Tatar as a 'metonymic representation of the nation', her presence as a researcher and ratified participant in interaction triggers the performance of a Tatar style with no Russian code-mixing. Although her analysis demonstrates the significance of language ideologies in analyzing researcher role, the audience design framework she employs situates identity as a pre-determined social category to which speakers react. Schilling-Estes' (1998) view of style shifting provides a critique of the audience design approach by emphasizing linguistic performances as proactive identity projections and role uptakes rather than reactions to assumed identities. In this framework, Wertheim's experience could be interpreted somewhat differently, claiming that the very linguistic act of using this particular Tatar style positions Wertheim as a researcher. However, Schilling-Estes focuses largely on the speaker's construction of their own identity rather than the ways in which linguistic performances also construct interlocutor identities and context while indexing culturally salient language ideologies.

]p[Kiesling's (2009) argument that style-shifting is achieved through acts of stancetaking suggests there is something to be gained by moving from the style shifting approaches discussed above to an analysis of stance when analyzing researcher-participant interview interactions. I

propose that language ideologies may be understood as more or less directly indexed evaluations of language and, as such, they are implicated in interactional dynamics. A stance approach allows us to analyze the interview as a process of inductive links between micro-level dynamics of researcher-participant interaction and macro-level language ideologies. This approach helps to capture the various and sometimes ephemeral factors that explain differences and similarities in interview outcomes.

]A[**POLITICS OF DIALECT AND DIVISION: ALBANIAN LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES**

]B[*Geg, Tosk, and the North-South model*

]fo[Linguistic and social division in Albanian-speaking territories of the Balkans has historically been interpreted through a North-South model both popularly and academically. In this model, the Central Albanian Shkumbin River (located running just south of the central city of Elbasan in Figure 1) serves as a geographic boundary dividing Albania into the Geg-speaking North and Tosk-speaking South with a small 'transition region' to the River's immediate south and various internal sub-dialect divisions (Figure 2). Differences between the Geg and Tosk dialects exist on all levels of linguistic structure as well as in the lexicon. The North is imagined largely as mountainous, isolated, and governed by traditional tribal codes, while the South is stereotyped as the North's opposite – more civilized and less mountainous and isolated. These images have a social history reaching back to the late Ottoman period, when the North and South belonged to different Ottoman provinces (Desnitskaia 1968: 47). Blumi (2011: 21) describes the late Ottoman-era figure of the Geg as 'violent and borderline stupid; the quintessential hillbilly' while that of the Tosk as a political elite and 'eloquent, civilized approximate[s] of a proper European.'

]INSERT FIGURES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE[

]p[Most importantly, however, the Geg-Tosk/North-South division represents a set of symbolic oppositions between high and low, open and closed, dirty and clean that can be used contextually to construct images of self and other (De Rapper 2002: 192). As symbolic oppositions, semiotic processes of erasure and fractal recursivity (Gal and Irvine 2000) are important to the construction of these categories. For example, the coherence of the Geg figure

rests on the erasure of cosmopolitan urban centers north of the Shkumbin River such as Shkodra, Elbasan, and Tirana (Figure 1) while the Tosk figure ignores rural, mountainous regions in the South. Furthermore, despite its salience, the North-South division along the Shkumbin River is complicated by nested regionalisms and sub-dialect divisions. This enables acts of fractal recursion whereby the northern city of Shkodra can represent qualities like low, open, and clean as opposed to the rest of the North and the southern region of Tepelena, the residents of which one consultant described as the 'hillbillies of the south', is associated with high, closed, and dirty in contrast to other southern regions.

]B[***National awakening and socialist modernity: The rise of standard language politics***
]fo[In the decades surrounding Albania's 1912 declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire, language played a significant role in the nation-building efforts of regional elites who are today known as the leaders of the Albanian National Awakening. Hoping to overcome religious diversity through linguistic unity, these leaders pushed for a unified literary Albanian to bring together the Geg and Tosk dialects and their existing literary traditions. The discourse of this era established the semiotic power of the Geg and Tosk dialects to evoke their corresponding characterological figures. As one National Awakening leader, Faik Konica, commented: 'the differences in the personality of Tosks and Gegs found expression in corresponding differences in their dialects' (Byron 1976: 52–58). The most successful proposal for a unified literary Albanian at this time advocated for the Central Albanian Geg variety associated with the city of Elbasan. This variety was seen as geographically and linguistically 'in-between' (Byron 1976: 58) while representing the region of the emerging institutional, industrial, and intellectual center, the capital of Tirana (Ismajli 2005: 60). However, with the rise of the Tosk-dominated socialist government in Albania after WWII, the politics of language shifted and the current Tosk-based Standard Albanian replaced the loosely official Geg variety.

]p[The Tosk-based standard emerged from the politics of North-South division under socialism. The North's affiliation with the *balli kombëtar*, the Albanian nationalist movement that opposed the socialists in a 1944 civil war, and the prestigious northwestern city of Shkodra's identification as a stronghold of Catholic culture were problems for the officially atheist socialist government. Consequently, the socialist leader and Tosk-native, Enver Hoxha, framed Geg culture as an impediment to Albania's modernization because of its so-called backward tribal

and religious practices (Blumi 1999: 307). Classic Geg authors were banned, the Geg dialect disappeared from artistic spheres it once dominated, and cultural representations of Geg were largely used to construct anti-heroes (Vehbiu 1997: 6). Furthermore, socialist-era institutional language ideologies connected dialect variation to the inequalities of capitalism and rural life, construing dialect disappearance as a sign of socialist modernization and urban life (e.g. Gjinari 1969: 22). With Tosk serving as the base for Standard Albanian, Geg became 'dialect' *par excellence*. Thus, socialist-era politics reproduced Ottoman-era images of Geg and Tosk, replacing these ethnographic labels with geographic ones. Geg dialect became problematic both for its association with northern politics and its status as 'dialect', while Tosk became essentially normative.

]p[Many scholars (e.g. Silverstein 1996; Gal and Irvine 2000; Gal 2006) highlight the dominance of a Herderian 'one language-one nation' ideology in Europe and the United States and its connection to the naturalization of monolingual, standard language cultures. The history of language standardization in Albania clearly fits this model. However, because language standardization is part of the broader standardizing ideology of industrialized Europe whereby the standardization of weights, measures, money, and language are intimately tied to the rise of international trade and capitalism (Milroy 2001: 534), it is also a trope of Western modernity. As a result, standard language can be an important index of Western belonging, especially in spaces typically excluded from the imagined West (e.g. Inoue 2002). Indeed, since the National Awakening, debates about Albania's Western identity have frequently manifested themselves through language ideologies (Sulstarova 2006: 148–151). As Ismajli (2005: 65) notes, which literary variety – Geg or Tosk – had a stronger basis in Western culture was one consideration in the search for a unified literary language. From this perspective, Standard Albanian traditionally represents legitimation as part of the modern West and, as the canonically non-standard variety, Geg represents its opposite.

]B[*Fractal recursions and anti-standardizing moves: Tirana and the center-periphery model*
]fo[Social changes of the post-socialist period have brought increasing complexity to Albania's sociolinguistic context. First, as socialism has become associated with the non-modern, non-European (Sulstarova 2006: 187), the status of Standard Albanian, a product of socialist-era language politics, has been publically challenged. A re-valorization of Standard Albanian is part

of the 'Geg Renaissance' (Vehbiu 1997) whereby northern intellectuals have made accusations of discrimination in language planning during socialism (e.g. Pipa 1989) and called for the incorporation of Geg features into Standard Albanian (e.g. Bokshi 2011; Hysenaj 2012). Furthermore, the use of Geg has re-emerged in public domains such as politics and pop culture. The former is associated with the significant role of politicians from the Albanian North in the post-socialist period. The latter is mostly facilitated by the popularity of contemporary Albanian music from Geg-speaking Kosova, the newly independent Albanian-majority state that was once largely inaccessible to citizens of socialist Albania.

]p[Equally important to post-socialist language ideologies are the capital city of Tirana and its broader region, Central Albania. Tirana falls significantly north of the Shkumbin River and linguists classify the local dialect as Geg; however, Tirana is also the center of government and academic institutions as well as dialect contact, contexts that prescriptively call for Standard Albanian. Post-socialist Tirana has experienced a demographic 'explosion' (Ismajli 2005: 8), growing from 400,000 to 550,000 (Republic of Albania 2012: 17) over a decade without accounting for significant informal migration that has extended the city's unofficial boundaries. Young Albanians represent an important segment of the population relocating to Tirana because, as my consultant Luli reported, 'Tirana has space for life.' She explained that Tirana offers a comfortable, modern lifestyle in terms of employment, education, and entertainment that cannot be found elsewhere in Albania.

]p[In this sense, Tirana does not fit the historic stereotype of the uncivilized Geg hillbilly despite falling into Geg-speaking territory. This ideological mismatch is true of the broader Central Albanian region to which Tirana belongs because it is also home to two of Albania's other large urban centers, Elbasan and Durrës. As a result, some speakers associate Tirana not with a sub-dialect of Geg but with an independent Central Albanian variety that is neither Geg nor Tosk but closest to Standard Albanian. While linguists do consider this region to have a distinctive sub-variety of Albanian that served as the loosely official standard language in the pre-socialist period, it is classified as Central Albanian Geg (Gjinari and Shkurtaj 2003: 160–162; Shkurtaj 2012: 23) or Southern Geg (Desnitskaia 1968: 77; Beci 2002: 15).

]p[Rather than exclusively reproducing the traditional North-South divide along the Shkumbin River, my consultants also propose a center-periphery model of linguistic division wherein Tirana and Central Albania serve as a normative center while the North and South both

serve as non-normative periphery (Morgan 2015). Just as figures of Geg and Tosk represent the North-South model of division, a cool, cosmopolitan *Tirons* figure represents the center in the center-periphery model. The importance of language is apparent in the demonym *Tirons*, which is marked for the non-standard phonology of Tirana dialect in opposition to the hyper-standard *Tiranas* that is used for jokes about one's outsider status as well as the less marked and most common *Tirans*. Like the 'Geg Renaissance', the prestige of Tirana and Central Albania complicates post-socialist language ideologies because it has the potential to change the social value of features and varieties linguists have historically classified as Geg.

]p[These shifting post-socialist language ideologies in dialectally diverse Tirana involves what Gal (2006: 178–179) has described as an 'anti-standardizing move', a practice of combining forms from different linguistic varieties that has the potential to transform ideological values in standard language cultures. Within the context of 'standard' and 'dialect' mixing in contemporary Tirana, dialect forms, in particular Geg features, do not necessarily index 'the past and tradition, in contrast to urban, state-centered modernity'. Instead, they can be used to index non-institutionally oriented ideologies of 'global youth culture and forward looking sophistication' (Gal 2006: 178–179).

]A[**CONTEXTUALIZING THE DATA AND RELATIONSHIPS**

]fo[The data in this article are from language ideology interviews gathered during six weeks of fieldwork in Tirana, Albania in the summer of 2014. At the time of this fieldwork, I had previously spent a total of three years in Albania, first as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a town about an hour to Tirana's south and then as a teacher and translator in Tirana. My Albanian is largely identified as standard, but I do control some Geg features common to Central Albania. Metalinguistic commentary in the interviews was rich and provided evidence of the emerging center-periphery model discussed in the previous section. However, after coding the first fifteen minutes of each interview with a single participant (N=9) for a set of dialect features, I found that overall there was little use of these features in the interview context.[2]

]p[In this article, I analyze only two of 15 interviews because my long-standing, close friendships with the consultants, Vilma and Luli,[3] bring out important analytical issues. Because negotiation of our roles as friend, researcher, and participant was necessary in a context where language was a topic of discussion, these interviews provide an opportunity to explore the nexus

of interaction and ideology. Furthermore, my relationship with these women allows me to view their linguistic performance within a broader picture of their linguistic and social experiences. Although Luli was raised along the north bank of the Shkumbin River in Central Albania and Vilma further South, research (e.g. Labov 1972 [1963]; Johnstone and Kiesling 2008; Johnstone 2011) shows that geography is not an ideologically neutral determinant of linguistic performance. Thanks to social and geographic mobility, formal education, and years of experience and shared social networks in the heterogeneous capital city, both women have available to them features that linguists would classify as Standard Albanian, Tosk, and Geg. Yet, their linguistic performances in these interviews are strikingly different in both explicit and implicit language ideologies.

]A[**VILMA – IDEOLOGIES OF STANDARD LANGUAGE**

]fo[Vilma is from the rural outskirts of a small municipal center in southern Albania where most of her family still lives. Although it is somewhat unconventional in Albanian society where family generally serves as the center of social life, she chooses not to live with family members in Tirana. At the time of this interview, Vilma was enrolled in a Master's program and had recently started working for a Western European business development company where she hoped to find an opportunity to leave Albania. The dialect associated with Vilma's home region includes some non-standard morphology and phonology, but as a southern variety, it is broadly perceived as standard. Since being in Tirana, Vilma has had close relationships with speakers of northern varieties and uses saliently northern dialect features in casual conversation sometimes. However, in the interview, Vilma demonstrates both explicit and implicit standardizing language ideologies.

]p[I conducted my interview with Vilma while having our morning coffee at a café near her home where I was staying for a few days. In Albania, the café is a central form of casual, everyday sociality. Because multiple daily visits can last for hours at a time, it is common for patrons to know owners, servers, and other patrons at their neighborhood café. My recording with Vilma captured an initial exchange where skin color, body size, and the appropriateness of their evaluation became the stance focus (see the Appendix for transcription conventions).]EXAMPLE[

]In all the transcripts in this article, in the first column (**Original transcript**), please leave half a line of space between each paired line of original transcript and English equivalent – just as it has been set out here. The English equivalent is in smaller font and is vertically aligned with the transcript it translates above it. Please keep this alignment. Please also retain the vertical alignment of square brackets on adjacent lines; this occurs in both columns[

Transcript 1 (V=Vilma; C=author)

Original transcript with English equivalent beneath	English translation
1V: ku është Jenny? where is Jenny	*where is Jenny?*
2C: Jenny është aty::; te::: ë:::h; Vasil Shanto Jenny is there at	*Jenny is over there::; at::: u:::h;* *Vasil Shanto*
3V: mhm	*mhm*

4C: akoma. e ke   par::::ë atë, gocën
    still   that have.2SG see.PTCP that girl
 	
  e saj?
    hers
	still. have you seen:::: that, daughter
	of hers?

5V: hn [hʔn]	*hn [hʔn]*

6C: është shumë < > lezetshme. (.9) është
    is   very   cute   is
 	
  shumë e lezetshme (quietly).
    very   cute
	she is really < > cute. (.9) she's
	really cute (quietly).

7V: pse është esmere; apo e bardh (loudly).	*why is she dark skinned; or white*

why is   dark-skinned or   white   *(loudly).*

8C: (1.5) e bardh e bardh është. po:::,   *(1.5) white she's white. yeah:::, I*
          white   white   is   yes   *mean, (.5)*

       domethënë, (.5)
       that_is_to_say

9V: se   burrin, e   ka   një çik   *cause her husband, is a bit dark*
       because husband him has.3SG a   bit   *skinned? (1.4) Jenny's. [or not.]*

       si   esmer? (1.4) Jenny. [apo jo.]
       like dark_skinned Jenny   or   no

10C: [nuk e di.]   *[I dunno.]*
                             not   it know.1SG

11V: apo; ka   qenë   verë, kur e   *or; it was summer, when I met him.*
       or   have.3SG be.PTCP summer when him   *maybe he'd been at the beach.*

       kam   takuar.   ndoshta ka   qenë
       have.1SG meet.PTCP maybe   have.3SG be.PTCP

       nga   plazhi.
       from beach

12C: mbase (whispering). nuk e di-   *maybe (whispering). I dunno- I hadn't*
       maybe   not   it know   *thought about it before. (1.3) [cause*
                                                   she's] really cute. she. is two:::/
       s' kisha   menduar më   përpara. (1.3)   *months now. three months?*
       not had.1SG think.PTCP more before

```
              [se      ës]htë shumë e lezetshme. ajo.
               because is       very   cute          she


              ka        dy:::? muaj tani. tre   muaj?
              have.3SG two     months now three months


13V:  [sa-](.6) Jenny është dobësuar:::? nga                      [how-]
       how    Jenny is      thinned      from       (.6) Jenny has slimmed::: down? from

                                                     giving birth or < >.(.6)

      lindja apo < >.(.6)
      birth   or


14C:  nuk e di.        kur isha      këtu në prill?      I dunno. when I was here in April?
      not   it know.1SG when was.1SG here in  April     no. but, she'd just given birth then.

                                                         so; I dunno now.
      jo. po, sa   kishte lindur          atëherë.
      no but just had.3SG give_birth.PTCP then


      kështu që;  nuk e di      tani.
      so       that  not it know.1SG now
```

]p[In line 7, Vilma asks me to explicitly evaluate the skin color of Jenny's baby. My response – pause, answer, and then hedge with 'I mean' in line 8 – is similar to that of California high school students who Bucholtz (2011: 226–227) found responded to interview questions about race with epistemic hedges in order to 'convey their disapproval of or discomfort with the question itself.' Vilma's subsequent turns suggest she senses my disapproval of this topic, an act that creates disalignment between us. By suggesting Jenny's husband is dark-skinned as a justification for her question (line 9), adding a tag question *apo jo* 'or not' (line 9), and proposing Jenny's husband had a tan as an explanation for claiming he was a bit dark-skinned (line 11), Vilma weakens her investment in the topic and her evaluation of Jenny's husband as dark-skinned. In this way, she brings her positioning toward these topics closer to mine and creates alignment. Throughout, I undermine my own epistemic authority with hedges despite the fact

that my relationship with Jenny and her family give me the experience to respond with my own evaluation. Eventually, I attempt to move the topic away from skin color by repeating that Jenny's baby is really cute. A similar interaction occurs in lines 13 and 14 when Vilma introduces Jenny's weight as a topic for discussion.

]p[The broader implications of my disapproving stance and Jenny's adjustments in investment must be interpreted in light of cultural presuppositions about the explicit discussion of skin color and body size. Such discussion is less likely to create discomfort in Albania than it is in the U.S. However, especially in the presence of a U.S. American woman perceived as liberal and open-minded, some Albanians claim this behavior is part of a retrograde Albanian mentality of *paragjykim* 'prejudice' and gossip. My attempts to avoid making evaluations about these stance focuses position me as a liberal Westerner and distance me from Vilma who, by engaging these topics, is associated with negatively valued behavior. In this way, our interaction draws attention to stereotypes about culturally distinct 'mentalities'. This interaction is important for interpreting Vilma's subsequent linguistic behavior because, despite my disapproving stance in this excerpt, the language ideology interview itself is premised on my asking Vilma to discuss regional and linguistics stereotypes in Albania, topics that are likewise understood to involve *paragjykim*.

]p[Vilma's explicit language ideologies focus largely on the Albanian North-South division. Across six consecutive turns after the topic is introduced, Vilma avoids making any strong qualification about this division, claiming only that its discussion leaves *tjetër shije* 'another flavor'. This is a noticeably ambiguous evaluation whose implied meaning, although clear for someone familiar with cultural stereotypes, leaves room for the speaker to deny any particular interpretation. In Transcript 2, I ask Vilma to be explicit about *tjetër shije*.
]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 2 (V=Vilma; C=author)

Original transcript with English equivalent beneath	English translation
1V: atëhere; veriu, (1.9) edhe për vetë veriorët, then north even for self northerners (1.1) zakonisht? (2.6) ë::::shtë um; (1.1)	*so; the north, (1.9) and the northerners themselves, (1.1) usually? (2.6) i::::t's um; (1.1) it's not this way (quietly); but if I can give it a name.*

usually	is	*it's (quietly) (1.2) less preferred.*

nuk ështe kështu (quietly); po nëse mund
not   is   thus   but if   can

t' i vë   një emër. ështe, (quietly)
to it place.SBJV.1SG a   name   is

 (1.2) më   të PApreferuar.
        more unpreferred

2C: mhm   *mhm*

3V: jugu; të preferuar.   *the south; preferred.*
       south preferred

4C: mhm   *mhm*

5V: NËse mund t' i vë   një emër.   *IF I can give it a name.*
       if   can to it place.SBJV.1SG a   name

6C: mhm   *mhm*

7V: nëse MUndet, t' i vijë   një   *if it's POSsible, to give it a name; it*
       if   is_possible to it place.SBJV.3SG a   *would be this way.*

       emër; do ishte   kështu.
       name FUT be.PST.3SG thus

]p[In her response, Vilma, as stance subject, explicitly evaluates the stance objects North and South with the stance predicates 'less preferred' and 'preferred', respectively. However, she also uses extended pauses, lengthening, quiet speech, and the modal verbs *mund* 'can' and *mundet* 'is possible' to weaken her personal investment in these evaluations and distance herself

from accusations of *paragjykim*. The labels 'preferred' and 'less preferred' are quite mild compared to those such as *malok* 'hillbilly' and *i trashë* 'thick-headed' often attributed to the North in everyday conversations. Vilma continues this low investment strategy with emphatic stress on words that express the conditional quality of the proposition (lines 5, 7) and epistemic hedges like *ndoshta gabohem* 'maybe I am wrong' and *në thojnza* 'in quotations' (throughout interview). In this way, Vilma takes an approach to discussing North-South division that is similar to my own in discussing skin color and body size.

]p[In subsequent discourse, the North and South serve as the stance focus of Vilma's narratives of the Ottoman, socialist, and post-socialist periods. When I ask Vilma why the North is 'less preferred' and the South 'preferred', she explicitly evaluates the North as undeveloped and closed and the South as developed and open, positioning the 'outside' as a morally positive influence and erasing a history of cosmopolitanism in northern urban centers.

]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 3 (Vilma)

Original transcript

with English equivalent beneath   English translation

Original transcript with English equivalent beneath	English translation
kanuni; ëh; zakonet, që veriu ka; dhe honor_code customs that north have.3SG and	*kanuni [honor code]; uh; customs, that the north has; and are a bit severe. I mean. uuuuuh the north is, more op- uh sorry. the south is more open; the north is more. uuuuh; more closed. .hh this is maybe because::; even in the time of occupations; the south was more traveled; { } < > to be occupied; than the north; for geographic reasons. occupation is a word u::::h, occupation to you sounds bad I mean; a devastated place; is. occupied by foreigners < >. but this has made it that, the southerners know the outside world more; than with the north- uh than the northerners. { } northerners were closed in that shell of*
i ka pak; të forta. domethënë. ë::::h them have.3SG bit strong that_is_to_say	
veriu është, më i hap- ëh më fal. north is more open me forgive.IMP.2SG	
jugu është më i hapur; veriu është më i. ë::::h; south is more open north is more	
më i mbyllur. .hh kjo ndoshta sepse::; edhe more closed this maybe because even	
në kohën e pushtimeve; jugu është rrahur	

in time   of occupations   south is   beat.PTCP

më   shumë; { }<   >të pushtohet;
more a lot   to be_occupied.SBJV.3SG

sesa veriu; për shkak të arsyes gjeografike.
than north for cause të of reason geographic

pushtimi është fjalë e:::; pushtimi të
occupation is   word   occupation you

tingullon keq domethënë; një vënd i shkatuar;
sounds.3SG bad that_is_to_say a   place devastated

është:::. pushtuar   nga të huaj <   >. por
is   occupy.PTCP by foreigners   but

kjo ka   bërë   që, jugorët
this have.3SG make.PTCP that southerners

të njihen   më shumë me
to get_familiarized.SBJV.3PL more a lot   with

botën e jashtme; sesa me veri- ëh sesa
world outside   than with north-   than

veriorët. { }veriorët   janë të mbyllur në atë
northerners northerners are   closed   in that

guackën e vetë;sipas   mentaliteteve të veta.
shell   own according_to mentalities   own

kjo nuk do të thotë   që jugu nuk ka

*theirs; according to their own mentalities.
this doesn't mean that the south doesn't
have mentalities. { } but the north is closed
in its own shell; according to its own mind;
and th- their DEVELOPMENT, has been
made uh; taking. that information inside the
shell, processing it, and transmitting only it.
{ } the south has- hasn't happened this way.
{ } the occupations have always hit the
south. always. in the time of the
dictatorship; the south was more preferred.
as far as investments are concerned. so too
in politics, now in recent years; investments
have begun in the north.*

this not FUT to say.3SG that south not has.3SG

mentalitete. { } po veriu është mbyllur në
mentalities   but north is   closed   in

guackën e vetë; sipas   mendjes së vetë;
shell   own   according_to mind   own

dhe ZHVILLI::MI i- i- tyre, është bërë   ëh;
and development   their   is   make.PTCP

duke marrë.   atë informacion brenda guackës,
GER take.PTCP that information   inside   shell

duke përpunuar   atë, dhe duke transmetuar
GER process.PTCP it   and GER   transmit.PTCP

vetëm ato. { } jugu nuk- nuk ka
only   those   south not   not have.3SG

ndodhur   kështu. { } gjithmonë pushtimet
happen.PTCP thus   always   occupations

kanë   rrahur   jugun. gjithmonë. kohën e
have.3PL beat.PTCP south always   time of

diktaturës; jugu ka   qenë   më i preferuar.
dictatorship south has.3SG be.PTCP more preferred

për sa i   përket investimeve. po ashtu edhe
for how them belongs investments yes this_way even

në politikë, tani vitet e fundit; kanë

in politics now years of last have.3PL

filluar investimet në veri.
begin.PTCP investments in north

]p[Up to this point in the interview, Vilma's standard language ideology was implicit in her evaluation of the South as cosmopolitan; however, toward the end of the interview, she takes an explicitly positive stance toward standard language. In line 1 of the next extract (Transcript 4), she explicitly evaluates the act of speaking Standard Albanian as a stance object with the stance predicates 'professional', 'warm', and 'proper'. Furthermore, she claims that because Standard Albanian is something that all Albanians should speak, by using it she can avoid drawing geographic distinctions that make some speakers feel inferior. This evaluation construes Standard Albanian as an index of inclusion, allowing her to orient toward liberal values that she, like many Albanians, associates with the modern West, including my own country, the United States. A significant pattern of pauses following my turns emerges in lines 2, 6, and 8. This highlights the fact that I am not responding to Vilma's evaluations or making evaluations of my own as I would in a typical friendly conversation. Instead, this behavior is associated with an observer or researcher. Finally, Vilma's talk not only implicitly aligns her with my initially established liberal Westerner identity, but it also explicitly disaligns her from her Albanian peers (line 3).

]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 4 (V=Vilma; C=author)

Original transcript with English equivalent beneath	English translation

1V: …me kalimin e kohës::, kupto::j
   with passing of time understand.1SG
 	
që::::është më profesionale, më
  that is more professional more
 	
e ngrohtë, (1.36) më e rregulltë, të
  warm more correct to
	…with the passing of time::, I understand:: that:::, it's more professional, warmer, (1.36) more correct, to speak standard.[4]

flasësh   letraren.
speak.SBJV.2SG literary

2C: mhm.   *mhm.*
        (2.04)   *(2.04)*

3V: kështu jam unë e PARA; në shoqërinë; në   *so I am the FIRST; in my circle of*
        thus   am I first   in society   in   *friends; in the people that I know, in*

        njerëzit që njof,   në rr- në ambiente   *surr- in environments that surround*
        people that know.1SG in   in environments   *me; that doesn't MAKE difference.*

        që më rrethojnë;   që nuk BËJ   *(1.75) uh: geographic.*
        that me surround.3PL that not make.1SG

        diferenca. (1.75) ëh: gjeografike.
        differences   geographic

4C: ëh hëh.   *uh huh.*

5V: dhe unë nëse flas,   gjuhën letrare; unë   *and I if speak, standard language; I*
        and I   if   speak.1SG language literary I   *don't MAKE DIFFERENCE.*

        nuk BËJ   DIFERENCA.
        not make.1SG differences

6C: mhm.   *mhm.*
        (1.5)   *(1.5)*

7V: sepse   tani unë; në fil- në qoftë   se   *because now I; in beg- if I begin to*
        because now I   in   in be.OPT.3SG that   *speak Tirana dialect; let's say. and I*
                                                                am at the table with one from the

filloj të flas **_Tirons_**;	_south; or one from the north; then in_
begin.1SG to speak.SBJV.1SG Tirana_dialect	_itself I convey inferiority. for those_
	geographic zones.
e zëmë. dhe unë jam në tavolinë me	
it catch.3PL and I am at table with	
një nga jugu;apo një nga veriu; atëhere	
one from south or one from north then	
vetvetiu i përcjell inferioritet. për këto	
by_itself them convey.1SG inferiority for those	
zona gjeografike.	
zones geographic	

8C: ëh hëh.   _uh huh._

     (0.9)   (0.9)

9V: nëse unë flas gjuhën letrare. që;	_if I speak the standard language._
if I speak.1SG language literary that	_that; normally they should speak, all_
	of Albania, and all the diaspora. I
normalisht duhet të flasin, gjithë	_don't convey a tone of inferiority._
normally should to speak.3PL all	
Shqipëria, dhe gjithë diaspora. unë nuk	
Albania and all diaspora I not	
përcjell ton inferioriteti.	
convey tone inferiority	

]p[In addition to these explicit discursive standard language ideologies, the absence of non-standard forms in Vilma's speech throughout this interview serves as an implicit standard

language ideology. She does not use any of the Geg dialect features I initially coded for, even though I know her to use them conversationally at times. She does not even use *shkurtime* 'shortenings', an emic category of dialect features that my consultants claimed are only 'light' dialect and that showed up frequently across multiple interviews. In Transcript 4, Vilma does use the word *Tirons*[5] 'Tirana dialect' (*~Tirans*) with non-standard phonology; however, this is not a representation of her own linguistic practice but rather an iconic representation of Tirana dialect itself. She likewise does not use any of the non-standard features of her own southern dialect.

]A[LULI – CHALLENGING THE STANDARD

]fo[Luli is from a small municipal center along the northern bank of the Shkumbin River. At the time of this interview, she had been living in Tirana together with family for six years and was finishing a Master's degree at a prestigious private university. Unlike Vilma, Luli visits her hometown frequently and has little desire to leave Albania, despite having an extensive group of foreign friends. Although linguists would classify Luli's hometown region as Geg-speaking, both the empirical reality and the social imagination are significantly more complicated because it is a dialect border region in Central Albania where factors such as education and relative urbanity play important roles. Luli orients toward a center-periphery model of division and considers herself a speaker of Central Albanian, which she differentiates from northern dialect and considers quite standard. In my observations of her everyday speech and analysis of her interview, Luli's use of Geg dialect features, although relatively infrequent, serves important interactional functions.

]fo[The beginning of Luli's interview is also significant for our subsequent interaction. I was staying with Luli at the time of her interview and this interview took place in her apartment. In Tirana, it is less common for social gatherings with friends and family to happen at home because of both limited space and the demands of proper hospitality. Consequently, interactions at home can have either a formal or an intimate feel, depending on the participants. I began the interview (Transcript 5) with demographic questions from my interview script, despite the fact that I knew the answers in Luli's case.

]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 5 (C=author; L=Luli)

Original transcript

	with English equivalent beneath	English translation
1C:	hh. kështu shoqe.(.9)ti ke lindur, this girlfriend you have.2SG born.PTCP në [nə]Liqen. apo jo. in Liqen or no	*hh. so girlfriend. (.9) you were born,* *in Liqen. or not.*
2L:	<@ po **n'[n]** Liqen. @> [@@] yes in Liqen	*<@ yes* **in** *Liqen. @> [@@]*
3C:	[<@ në] Liqen. @> ti do qeshesh; in Liqen you FUT laugh.SBJV.2SG e di. hh. po prinderit? nga i it know.1SG but parents from them keni. have.2PL	*[<@ in] Liqen. @> you will laugh;* *I know. hh. and your parents? where* *are they from.*
4L:	ëh. prindërit i kam:::; babi është parents them have.1SG father is nga Lumi; mami nga Përroi. from Lumi mother from Përroi	*uh. my parents are:::; dad is from* *Lumi; mom's from Përroi.*
5C:	po. edhe gjyshërit? yes even grandparents	*yeah. and grandparents?*
6L:	gjyshërit të dy janë nga Lumi; grandparents both are from Lumi dhe dy nga Përroi. and two from Përroi	*grandparents both are from Lumi;* *and two from Përroi.*

7C: po.   *yeah.*
yes

8L: origjina e largët, dhe pastaj::; është   *my distant origin, and then::::; is it's*
    origin   distant   and then   is   *own story.*

    histori m' vete.
    story   in self

9C: mirë. mirë. nuk- nuk na duhet historia <@   *good. good. we don't need your <@*
    good good not   not us need history   *distant @>origin [@@@]*

    e largët @> [@@@]
    distant

10L: [po pra.]   *[yeah exactly]*
                yes then

11C: <@ .hhh @> edhe kur ke   ardhur   *<@ .hhh @> and when did you*
              even when have.2SG come.PTCP   *come to Tirana (.) to live. (.7) I*

                                    mean. (quietly)

    në Tiranë.(.) për të jetuar.(.7) e kam
    in Tirana   for to live   it have.1SG

    fjalën. (quietly)
    word

12L: dy:: mijë, e tetën.   *two::: thousand, and eight.*
    two thousand and eight

13C: dy mijë e tetën. (quietly) kështu   *two thousand and eight. (quietly) so,*
    two thousand and eight   thus   *it turns out::: how many years do*

you have?

          që, i bie::::. sa   vite ke?
          that it fall.3SG how_many years have.2SG

14L: gjashtë.   *six.*
        six

15C: gjashtë. (quietly) dhe pse erdhe.   *six. (quietly) and why did you come.*
        six   and why come.PST.2SG   *for school?*

        për shkollë?
        for school

16L: *më lindi   një dëshirë e madhe*   *a great desire was born to me <@*
        me be_born.PST.3SG a   desire   big   *to come to Tirana @>[@@@]*

        <@për të ardhur   n'Tiranë @>[@@@]
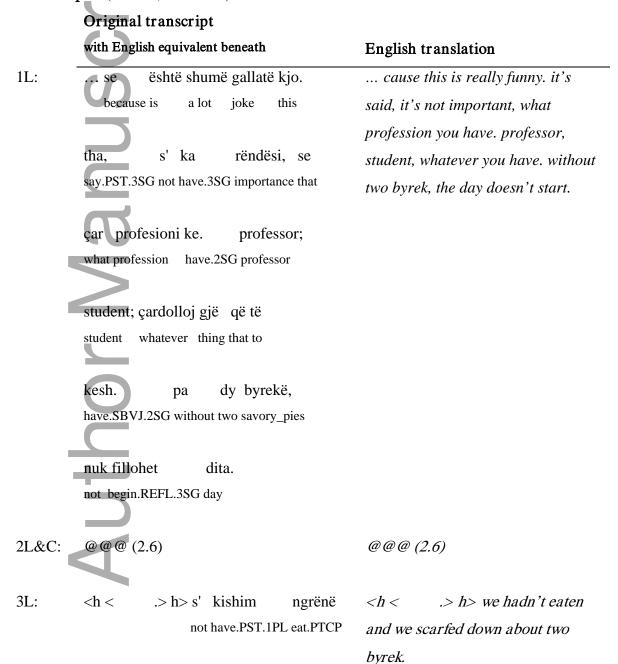   for to come.PTCP to Tirana

]p[Dialect features emerge as markers of stance in our first question-answer sequence.
Responding to me in line 2, Luli repeats *n'Liqen* 'in Liqen' with an elided schwa after my full
schwa production. Schwa elision is considerably more frequent in Geg and has a broad
indexicality that is associated with informal, non-standard language, particularly when
represented orthographically. Luli's schwa elision and the laughter that accompanies it serve to
evaluate my question as humorous not only because I know the answer but also because I have
already positioned myself as a friend by referring to her as *shoqe* 'girlfriend' in line 1. In light of
the text-metrical structure of our question-answer sequence, Luli's elision marks disalignment
from my more formal speech. Then, in line 15, Luli evaluates my question about her move to
Tirana as humorous by using a higher register expression 'to me was born a great desire'
together with laughter and another instance of schwa elision that contrasts with my full schwa in
the question portion of this sequence. Thus, rather than trying to align with the linguistic
behavior that positions me in a more formal researcher role, Luli evaluates it as humorous,
presumably in light of my long-term friendship with Luli and her family. When I asked Vilma

similar questions in her interview, she answered matter-of-factly without laughter despite my similar relationship with her and her family.

]p[In the next excerpt, Luli is telling me about what she did the previous day with a mutual friend of ours. Her use of Geg features again serves as an evaluation of various stance focuses as humorous.

]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 6 (L=Luli; C=author)

	Original transcript with English equivalent beneath	**English translation**
1L:	… se është shumë gallatë kjo. because is a lot joke this tha, s' ka rëndësi, se say.PST.3SG not have.3SG importance that çar profesioni ke. professor; what profession have.2SG professor student; çardolloj gjë që të student whatever thing that to kesh. pa dy byrekë, have.SBVJ.2SG without two savory_pies nuk fillohet dita. not begin.REFL.3SG day	*… cause this is really funny. it's said, it's not important, what profession you have. professor, student, whatever you have. without two byrek, the day doesn't start.*
2L&C:	*@@@ (2.6)*	*@@@ (2.6)*
3L:	<h < .> h> s' kishim ngrënë not have.PST.1PL eat.PTCP	*<h < .> h> we hadn't eaten and we scarfed down about two byrek.*

dhe futëm   nja   dy byrekë.
and put_in.PST.1PL about two savory_pies

4C: po pikërisht dy. duhet   të jenë.   *so exactly two. it should be.*
       but exactly   two is_necessary to be.SBVJ.3PL

5L: po. dy.   *yeah. two.*
       yes two

6C: po. jo vetëm një.   *yeah. not just one.*
       yes no only   one

7L: t- a fillosh   tamam duhen   *to begin right you need two. @@@*
       to it begin.SBVJ.2SG exactly are_necessary   *now; when you **act** like this; like you*

       dy. @@@ tani; kur **bo**   kështu;   *want **to lose weight**, you can eat*
       two   now   when do.2SG like_this   *even one. uh. then:::, I saw Tatijana*

       sikur do **me u**   **dobsu**,   mund   *off to school, came home myself. was*
       like FUT INF REFL slim_down.PTCP can   *waiting for the shower to heat up. <*
                                                        > and an hour; my brother came?
       të hash   edhe një. ëh. pastaj:::;   *(1.9) that's all. took a shower, went*
       to eat.SBVJ.2SG even one   then   *out then; Mary came over. left. had*
                                                        coffee with her.
       Tatijanën e   përcolla   për
       Tatijana   her accompany.PST1SG for

       shkollë, vetë erdha   në shtëpi.
       school   self come.PST.1SG in house

       po   prisja   do më bëhet
       PROG wait.IPFV.1SG FUT me become

dushi. < > dhe një orë dorë; erdhi

shower   and   one hour hand   come.PST.3SG

vëllai? (1.9) kaq. bëra dush,

brother   that's_all do.PST.1SG shower

dola pastaj; që më erdhi

go_out.PST.1SG then   that me
come.PST.3SG

Meri. ika. piva kafe me

Mary   leave.PST.1SG drink.PST.1SG coffee
with

atë.

her

8C: po.   *yeah.*

        yes

9L: h edhe në njëmbëdhjetë të natës u   *.h and at 11 o'clock at night I came*

       even in eleven   of night REFL   *home. special occasion;* **_met_**

                                                   *some **_Americans_** @@@*

     ktheva në shtëpi. rast i veçantë;

     return.PST.1SG in house   occasion special

     takuam [takum] ca   **_amerikanë_**

     meet.PST.1PL   some americans

     [amerikon] @@@

10L&C: *@@@ (1.7)*   *@@@ (1.7)*

]p[The Geg infinitive is an undisputed dialect shibboleth that has been at the forefront of post-socialist standardization debates. Consultants qualified the use of this feature by someone like Luli who does not identify as a Geg speaker as joking (*shaka*), showing off (*shet mend*), or acting better than someone else (*tangarllik*). The only token of the Geg infinitive to appear in all of my interviews – *me u dobsu* 'to lose weight' – occurs in line 7 of this segment together with *bo* (2SG PRES 'do, make') (~*bën*), which is distinctive of the Tirana region (Shkurtaj 2012: 91), as Luli tells a joke about eating two *byrek* 'savory pies' to start the day. The use of these dialect features serves as a mocking evaluation of the stance focus, a high-maintenance type who does not eating two *byrek* in the morning out of concern for their weight. In line 9, Luli uses a monophthongized diphthong[6] in *takum* (~*takuam*) together with another dialect shibboleth, a non-standard phonological variant stereotypically linked to Tirana, in *amerikonë* (~*amerikanë*). The stance focus is my own nationality and her use of dialect serves to teasingly draw attention to my seemingly incongruous identities of outsider researcher and insider close friend. Her evaluations of humor through dialect features allow for her to position both of us in friendship rather than institutional roles while my own engagement with her joke through rhetorical questions and laughter in lines 2, 4, 6, and 10 serve as a form of alignment. In this way, our behavior in this interaction creates an informal, friendly context.

]p[The use of non-standard Geg features in an interview context with an expectation of formality also serves as an implicit non-standardizing language ideology. Just as the North-South model of division tends to accompany a standardizing language ideology, an orientation toward a center-periphery model of division tends to accompany a non-standardizing ideology. Luli explicitly orients toward such a center-periphery model. Leading up to this turn, she has said the South and North do not change the way they talk when they come to Tirana because they are extremes in contrasts with a more neutral center. In this excerpt (Transcript 7), she voices a Geg speaker by using the Geg gerundive particle *tu* (~*duke*) as well as phonologically Geg variants *njonin* (Tosk/SA: *njërin*) and *nonjë* (Tosk/SA: *ndonjë*). The distinction between Tirana, which she refers to using iconic *Tirona*, and Geg dialects is implicit in the claim that Geg speakers don't participate in Tirana slang. Although the use of these Geg features serves voicing functions, it also associates her with Central Albania because it demonstrates her linguistic flexibility as a resident of the place where dialects meet.

]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 7 (L= Luli; C=author)

Original transcript

with English equivalent beneath

	English translation

1L: domethënë ti nuk mund të
that_is_to_say you not can to

I mean you not can conceptualize __one,__

konceptosh   __njonin, tu__
conceptualize.SBJV.2SG anyone PTCP.GER

__*speaking,*__ *with Geg dialect, and* __*throwing*__

fol,   me dialekt geg, e __tu__
speak.PTCP with dialect Geg and PTCP.GER

__*in*__ __*some some*__ *slang. I mean; those*

fus   __nonjë- nonjë__ sleng. domethënë;
put.PTCP any any slang that_is_to_say

of __*Tirona*__*. while:::; these::- that are*

nga këto të __Tirons__. kurse:::::; këta::- që
from these of Tirana while these that

closer; have it; take it more easily.

janë më afër; e kanë më; e marrin më
are more close it have.3PL more it take.3PL more

absorb it more easily.

lehtë. e thithin më lehtë.
easily it absorb.3PL more easily

2C: më afër, po kush është më afër;
more close but who is more close

closer, but who is closer; for example.

për shembull.
for example

3L: <h po::: h> pjesa e këtyre. ëh. Elbasani;
       yes part of these Elbasan

<h yea::: h> part of these. uh. Elbasan;

Kavaja; Durrës. these that are, I mean;

closer to Tirana. Central Albania in
general;

Kavaja; Durrsi. këto që janë, domethënë;
Kavaja   Durrës   these that are   that_is_to_say

më   afër Tiranës. Shqipëri e mesme n'
more close Tirana   Albania   middle   in

përgjithsi;
general

   ]p[During our last exchange in this interview (Transcript 8), Luli uses a reduced
diphthong *pytje* (~*pyetje*) when asking whether I have any more questions for her. Similar to our
initial interaction, the dialect feature serves to humorously evaluate the interview as the stance
focus because of the unusual roles it implies for each of us. As in other examples, this stance
challenges our roles as researcher and participant, positioning us as friends.
]EXAMPLE[

Transcript 8 (L=Luli; C=author)

Original transcript
with English equivalent beneath   **English translation**

1L: do më bësh ndonjë ***pyetje [pytje]***	*will you ask me any other question now?*
FUT me make.FUT.2SG any question	@@
tjetër tashi? @@	
other now	
2C: jo s' besoj. kaq kemi.	*no I don't believe so. that's all I have.*
no not believe.1SG that's_all have.1PL	
3L: mbylle pra; @@	*turn it off then; @@*
close it then	

]A[**DISCUSSION**

]fo[Through her explicit evaluations of North and South, Vilma aligns with a widely shared discourse that reproduces a North-South model of division and, by valorizing the South as more cosmopolitan, implicitly supports the Tosk-based Standard Albanian. Furthermore, Vilma's positive evaluation of Standard Albanian is explicit in Transcript 4 and implicit in the absence of markedly non-standard forms throughout the interview. More important, Vilma's low investment evaluations of North and South in Transcript 2 mirror my own behavior toward skin color and body size in Transcript 1. The similarity in evaluation style toward topics with similar implications for *paragjykim* can be seen as a kind of parallelism that produces alignment between interlocutors. Moreover, by distancing herself from stereotypically Albanian *paragjykim* and evaluating the world outside of Albania as an authority on modern development in Transcript 3, Vilma makes an effort to align with me as a perceived representative of modern Western values. Finally, my withholding of evaluations and contribution of little other than backchannels in these interactions contrasts with my more typical linguistic behavior in friendly conversations over coffee. Our negotiation of alignment through the production of differing cultural identities and power relations places us in our respective participant and researcher roles, construing the context as an interview rather than a friendly interaction.

]p[Unlike Vilma, Luli uses Geg dialect features and does not discuss Standard Albanian, creating a different ideological and interpersonal effect. In discussing the linguistic practice of a prominent post-socialist politician from the North, Vehbiu (1997: 11) claims that the 'mixing' of dialect and standard in the formal context of politics produces a 'paradox', highlighting the importance of context and co-text in language ideologies. It is a similar expectation of formality in the interview context that enables Luli's use of dialect together with standard language to serve as humor that contest the interview's formality and the researcher role I take on by, for example, asking demographic questions to which I already know the answer. Together with uptake of her jokes in Transcript 6, the use of dialect serves the interactional function of positioning us as friends having a casual conversation. Finally, the use of dialect features in a discussion where dialect is the topic of conversation can also serve as a kind of epistemic stance, or claim to knowledge of that dialect (e.g. Johnstone 2007). In demonstrating an ability to use Geg features despite not considering them part of her 'normal' repertoire, as she indicated in

other parts of the interview, Luli indexes her alignment with a center-periphery model of division, a Central Albanian identity, and a non-standardizing language ideology.

]p[Thus, despite comparable linguistic repertoires, similar young adult social circles in Tirana, and equally close friendships with me, my interviews with Vilma and Luli turn out significantly different. Comparing these interviews demonstrates that the identities, indexical connections, and formal or informal quality of an interview interaction should not be taken for granted as an automatic outcome of pre-determined factors. Rather, outcomes are contingent upon choices made during interaction such as my withholding of evaluations or uptake of jokes, Vilma's alignment with institutional expectations about standard language, and Luli's use of dialect for humor. When considered in light of cultural and dialogic context, the differences in the women's linguistic performances constitute a process of stancetaking that indexes distinct ideological orientations and interpersonal relations. Their linguistic performances amount to language ideologies inasmuch as they are valorizations of language, at times propositionally expressed and other times inferred from the use or not of particular linguistic features. However, as evaluations, these explicit and implicit language ideologies also contribute to positioning and alignment that construe roles and context as more or less interview-like. Viewed in this way, Luli's use of non-standard Geg features challenge the expectations of a formal interview context and the authority of my role as researcher while indexing an implicit non-standardizing, center-periphery linguistic ideological orientation. Meanwhile, Vilma's use of a standard register and low-investment overt evaluations serve as an attempt to align with my own researcher positioning and a standardizing language ideology associated with Western modernity.

]A[**CONCLUSION**

]fo[Within the field of sociolinguistics, research that addresses linguistic performances in researcher-participant interactions has frequently used a style-shifting framework (e.g. Schilling-Estes 1998; Wertheim 2006); however, these approaches have been limiting in their exclusive focus on speaker identity and linguistic performance (e.g. Schilling-Estes 1998) or pre-existing identity categories (Wertheim 2006). One way to overcome these challenges is by incorporating a more interactional approach to the interview through stance, acts of which Kiesling (2009) suggests ultimately constitute style. I argue here that stance provides a better way to analyze linguistic performances in interviews because by connecting acts of evaluation to acts of

positioning and alignment, it allows us to see how particular language ideological frameworks are linked to the construal of interlocutor identities and context. Furthermore, because of stance theory's emphasis on dialogic and cultural context, we can see how a multitude of factors including not only interviewee but also interviewer linguistic performance and cultural presuppositions contribute to the outcome of an interview.

]p[The argument presented in this article also bears upon the way interviews and the linguistic performances of individuals participating in them are used and interpreted in sociolinguistic research. Modan and Shuman (2011: 14) suggest that although it has often been considered 'inferior to spontaneous situated interaction', in fact the sociolinguistic interview has much to offer the analyst because of its inherent interactional relationships. Likewise, research that integrates interactional and variationist approaches (e.g. Schilling-Estes 1998, 2004; Kiesling 2009) shows that looking more closely at interviews reveals the need to view linguistic performances as the result of meaningful participant choices in the context of interaction. This article supports the view that we must look more closely at interaction while incorporating significant 'cultural presuppositions' into our analysis. Indeed, the major contribution of stance here is its ability to display the links between these different levels of analysis and challenge any suggestion that interactional and cultural factors can be successfully severed in our understanding of the social meaning of variation.

]p[Finally, these interviews serve as evidence of the ideological connections that exist in post-socialist Albania. Historical discourses about language standardization, regionalisms, and Western belonging in Albania have played a significant role in construing the standardizing language ideology and North-South model of division that appear in Vilma's interview. However, despite their dominance, these orientations exist alongside ideologies emerging from the growing urbanization and linguistic pluralism of Tirana. Luli's interview establishes the connection between a center-periphery model of linguistic division and an anti-standardizing ideology, both of which appear to be associated with non-institutional but cool, cosmopolitan values because they have developed during the post-socialist period when the state has taken a much less official role in Albanian language policies and movement both within and outside of the country has become common. Inasmuch as the effect of such a practice may be that stereotypically non-standard forms find a place in various kinds of public or formal speech, it can be seen as a kind of anti-standardizing move (Gal 2006: 178–179).

]p[In this article, I have demonstrated how competing language ideologies emerge and accomplish different interactional effects through the course of two interviews. Each of these interviews demonstrates an indexical link moving through the micro-level of interactional alignments to social identities and contexts as well as broader post-socialist language ideologies in Albania. Thus, they serve as examples of how macro-level ideological orientations and micro-level interactional considerations work together to construe multiple levels of indexical meaning in the sociolinguistic context of an interview. By bringing it to bear explicitly on issues of interview context and researcher role, this article uses stance in a new way to address an old problem.

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]NOTES[

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1. I would like to express my gratitude to the friends who generously agreed to participate in my researcher. Many thanks also go to Brian Joseph, Anna Babel, and Devin Grammon for their support and comments on various earlier versions of this research. Ardian Vehbiu deserves credit for the Albanian translation of the abstract. Finally, I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and the editors for the time dedicated to getting my work to publication.

2. Only one variable appeared in its Geg variant multiple times across multiple interviews. This is discussed in more detail in Morgan (2015) where the entire set of interviews is analyzed.

3. All person and place names are pseudonyms.

4. The more literal translation here would be 'literary' (*letrare*). In some cases there is a distinction between *gjuha letrare* ('literary language') as the language of literature and *gjuha standarde* ('standard language') as the institutional language. However, often these terms are synonyms (Ismajli 2005: 35), as is the case in my data.

5. The term for Tirana dialect is typically *Tironçe* rather than *Tirons*. It is unclear why this speaker uses *Tirons*.

6. The literature varyingly classifies *ua~ue*, *ye*, and *ie* as diphthongs or as vowel clusters based on factors such as length, stress placement, and historical development (Newmark, Hubbard and Prifti 1982: 12; Camaj 1984: 7; Memushaj 2011: 40–43, 220; Çabej 2012:

49–53). Thus, the status of these features deserves further study; however, here I follow

Newmark in calling these clusters diphthongs.

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Address correspondence to:

Carrie Ann Morgan
Department of Anthropology
University of Michigan
101 West Hall
1085 S. University Ave.
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1107
U.S.A.

camorg@umich.edu

]A[**APPENDIX:** *Transcription conventions*

;	fall to mid
.	fall to low
,	rise to mid
?	rise to high
-	interrupted IU/word
:::	lengthening of preceding sound
<h h>	high pitch register
< >	uninterpretable vocal noises
( )	transcriber notes
{ }	interviewer backchannel
[ ]	overlapping speech
.hh	inhale
hh.	exhale
@@	laughter
(1.5)	pause length
CAPITALS	emphatic stress/increased amplitude and pitch
bold italic underlined	saliently non-standard linguistic feature discussed in analysis

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Figure 1: Geographic map of Albania (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency n.d.)

Figure 2: Dialect Map of Albania with sub-dialect divisions: (1) Northwestern Geg; (2) Northeastern Geg; (3) Central Geg; (4) Southern (Central Albanian) Geg; (5) transition dialects; (6) Northern Tosk; (7) Lab Tosk; (8) Çam Tosk (Elsie and Gross 2009)