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Title: Linguistic innovations: The pursuit of cyber-identities.

Literature shows that identity and social roles are routinely expressed through and in the language of conversation (Parsons 1951; Schutz 1962; Garfinkel 1967), with much work focusing on expressions of gender identity (Cameron 1997; Coates 1994, 2000; Holmes 1986, 1995; Keenan 1974, Tannen 1987) and the social need for the performance of gender-differential identities (Lorber & Farrell 1991; West & Zimmerman 1991). While Butler's interpretation of performativity (Butler 1999, Cameron & Kulick 2003) suggests possibilities for contest and challenge to normative expectations in everyday life, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) arguably offers a more radical option: communication that is effectively 'bodiless' (Haraway 2004). The absence of the body in online communication allows the abandonment of performances that encode gender/sex, nationality, ethnicity, age, physical appearance and physical ability etc, and suggests the possibility of a uniquely equitable online society.

This paper shows that rather than exploiting the possibilities offered by such a 'bodiless' communicative environment, CMC users are increasingly adopting innovative linguistic ways of displaying their identities, apparently responding to a desire to express fine details of identity and self-other relations. This paper explores some elements of this process, with a central focus being the examination of linguistic forms that appear to map features of gender identities of everyday conversation onto 'talk' in new media. In addition to providing evidence that counters claims that a bodiless cyber-utopia will be embraced, it is suggested that these features may raise an increasing challenge for online identity 'faking'. (New Media, identities, gender, linguistic innovation, cyberfeminisms)