Is cool the new symbolic capital?
Social meaning as a rapid diffusion determinant
in experiments and tweets

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Since Eckert's (2012) seminal classification of social meaning treatment in a First, Second, and Third Wave, sociolinguists have become aware that speakers are more than "token-bundles of demographic characteristics" (p. 99), and that social meaning making is an agentive, dynamic and highly contextualized process. The implementation of the latter insight, however, has engendered a deplorable schism in sociolinguistics between quantitative and qualitative sociolinguists. In an attempt to bridge this divide, I propose a "Fourth Wave" approach which quantifies contextualized social meaning as a predictor of two recent diffusions in Netherlandic Dutch.

Vocal fry is a type of phonation which sounds like the sizzling of frying bacon. Vocal fry is well-known and well-theorized in the US/UK, but in The Netherlands, it was linguistically "discovered" only in 2019; to date, there have been no sound empirical accounts of the reasons for its Dutch diffusion. I present recent corpus and speaker evaluation data (collected in collaboration with Shelley Wiersma) to demonstrate that vocal fry is associated with a number of identifiable social meanings which plausibly determine its diffusion.

In a second case study, I go back to the non-standard use of the object pronoun *hun* "them" as a subject. With Roeland van Hout, I collected Twitter data to obtain a sufficient number of tokens of subject-*hun*, but also to investigate the validity of two hypotheses, viz. (1) that subject-*hun* is a "vivid contrast" profiler which thrives in contexts of evaluation and qualification, and (2) that it is propelled by the cool prestige that has been confirmed as a social meaning correlate of many other diffusions (also in the UK, see Stuart-Smith et al. 2013 for an overview).

My paper is a plea for an inclusive (laboratory) sociolinguistics which recognizes the crucial importance of both social and functional meaning triggers in diffusion processes.