

Language Variation and Identity in Sunderland

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Abbreviations

BrE	British English
CS	Casual style
CofP	Community of Practice
DuE	Durham English
EDD	<i>English Dialect Dictionary</i>
FS	Formal style
IdQ	Identity questionnaire (when this abbreviation is followed by a number, the number refers to a question number, e.g. “MF04 – IdQ 2” refers the reader to MF04’s response to question 2 in her identity questionnaire)
ISA	Index of Sunderland Affiliation
ISI	Identification Score Index
LMC	Lower middle class
LWC	Lower working class
MbE	Middlesbrough English
MC	Middle class
ME	Middle English
MF	Middle-aged female
MM	Middle-aged male
MMC	Middle middle class
MWC	Middle working class
NbE	Northumberland English
NECTE	Newcastle Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English
NS-SEC	National Statistics for the derivation of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification
OE	Old English
OF	Older female
OM	Older male
PVC	<i>Phonological Variation and Change in Contemporary Spoke British English</i> project
RPS	Reading passage style
SED	Survey of English Dialects
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
SRN	Sense Relation Network
StE	Standard English
SundE	Sunderland English
SuRE	Survey of Regional English
TE	Tyneside English
UWC	Upper working class
WC	Working class
WLS	Word-list style
YF	Young female
YM	Young male

Transcription conventions used in extracts from the Sunderland interviews.

.	Brief pause
..	Medium pause
...	Long pause
-	False start – partial word
--	False start – whole word
[...]	Some parts of the argument have been left out
[-]	Uncertain
[XX]	Uncertain
(¿XXX?)	Extract that is not very clear – not 100% sure.
@	Laughter
<L>	The fieldworker (initial)

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation reports a study of language variation and identity conducted in Sunderland. The City of Sunderland, in North-east England, is situated about 15 miles to the south of Newcastle. As a result of this proximity to the dominant urban centre in the region, Sunderland people are often identified by outsiders as ‘Geordies’ and their dialect as ‘Geordie’. Even existing accounts of dialect variation in North-east England have often subsumed Wearside into Tyneside. Such representations of Sunderland, its people and dialect, however, are rather problematic given the deeply-rooted rivalry that exists between the inhabitants of the two localities, which have led to a clear divide between Newcastle and Sunderland in terms of identity. Moreover, folk-linguistic evidence also appears to point to the existence of a linguistic ‘divide’ as well.

For the study of the language and identity of the Sunderland community, a corpus of data has been collected using the Survey of Regional English methodology (Llamas 1999). This method enables the quick and efficient elicitation of linguistic and attitudinal data. The population sample consists of 32 native informants from Sunderland who are stratified by age and gender. The five accent variables analysed have been selected by exploring the informants’ perceptions of linguistic difference, with the intention of ascertaining whether their awareness of variation between the two varieties is reflected in their actual linguistic usage. The usage of these variables is investigated across the gender and age groups to identify any evidence of change over time and gendered patterns. Furthermore, this study employs a language ideological framework which enables a locally meaningful account of the identified patterns of variation. This entails a close examination of the local identity and the symbols and ideologies whereby Sunderland people establish themselves as a cohesive community. The findings suggest that there are indeed differences between Newcastle and Sunderland in the usage of the variables identified by the speakers; also, it appears that language usage bears a strong link to the way in which speakers identify with, and position themselves in, the community.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This work investigates language variation and identity in the City of Sunderland, in North-east England.

In the past, North-eastern English has attracted a good deal of interest from regional and social dialectologists. However, most of this work has focused on the Northumbrian dialect and, more typically, on Tyneside English (henceforth TE), the variety of the largest conurbation in North-east England, popularly known as ‘Geordie’. Existing dialect accounts which have attempted to provide an overview of the most characteristic features of dialects of England (e.g. Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2005, Wells 1982, Trudgill 1990) have generally chosen to concentrate on Tyneside as a representative of all the North-eastern dialects. Hughes *et al.* (2005: 122), for example, open their section on Northumberland English indicating that ‘[t]he speech of Northumberland is represented here by a traditional dialect speaker from Tyneside, the urban area which dominates this region’. In his classification of the Northern dialects, Wells (1982:350) defines the North-east as the ‘far north’. Yet, he indicates that ‘the far north means Tyneside and Tee-side [*sic*]’. He then explains that:

[t]he accent of the former differs from typical northern accents considerably more than that of the latter [...]. Tyneside is the Newcastle-upon-Tyne conurbation, the modern county of Tyne and Wear, the home of the accent commonly referred to as ‘Geordie’. Tee-side [*sic*] centres on Middlesbrough and the modern county of Cleveland. Between them is County Durham, with an accent referred to locally as ‘Pitmatic’.

In this classification, there is no allusion to Wearside as one of the constituting areas of Tyne and Wear. Tyneside is defined as the county of Tyne and Wear, and Geordie the accent spoken in this area. Later on, in the introduction to the section on Tyneside English (1982: 374), Wells does seem to take account of Wearside (i.e. Sunderland) as part of Tyneside, which he says includes:

Tyneside and Wearside, it comprises Newcastle-upon-Tyne itself together with the surrounding urban areas, formerly straddling the border between County Durham and Northumberland but now constituting the metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear (Wells 1982: 374)

The Sunderland dialect in these studies seems to be subsumed into the Tyneside variety, which is rather problematic given that there is a clear distinction between Newcastle and Sunderland in terms of identity and at least folk-linguistic evidence of a linguistic ‘divide’ (furthermore, as we will see later on in this introductory chapter, these locations are actually two separate metropolitan boroughs). References to this important regional distinction have been made by researchers of TE. Beal (1999b), for example, points out that the language and identity distinction between Newcastle and Northumberland is not as marked as that between Newcastle and Sunderland. It is for this reason that in Newcastle:

[t]he important boundary is that in the south, where the limits of the City of Sunderland bring us to the territory of that rival tribe, the “Mackems” distinguished in language by their tendency to drop aitches and to use words such as *matey*, and in custom by their adherence to Sunderland F.C. There is a certain common identity in the North-east of England as a whole (the area from the Tweed to the Tees), but anybody mistaking a person from Sunderland or Middlesbrough [*sic*] for a Geordie has made an unforgivable social gaffe (1999b: 34).

Moreover, in an earlier article she indicates that the southern part of Tyne and Wear ‘covers the City of Sunderland, home of a different urban dialect and a distinct local identity, that of “Makems”’ (1993b: 1).

Thus, although some of the existing literature on the Tyneside dialect makes some reference to differences between these two urban varieties, to this date there has been an absence of research into the Sunderland dialect.¹ Often the references to differences between Tyneside and Sunderland English were made on the basis of folk narratives of difference, casual observation or on the basis of the SED findings, which were not specifically from Sunderland but from villages around County Durham, the closest one being Washington.

In the present study into the language and identity of Sunderland, one of the main objectives was to identify some of the accent and dialect features which may distinguish this variety from TE. However, this was not to be done following the Labovian approach (often adopted in sociolinguistics) where patterns of language usage are correlated with the socio-demographic categories to which speakers have been allocated beforehand and thus explained on the basis of the quantitative differences identified between the groups and mainstream ideologies. Whilst this

¹ The only exception was Burbano (2001), a comparative study into lexical erosion and innovation amongst Newcastle and Sunderland teenagers.

study does adopt a quantitative approach to language variation, a language ideological framework is taken that allows us to account for language variation in a locally meaningful way (Milroy 2004). This involves the examination of the local social and ideological context in order to identify the speakers' motivations for language differentiation. Symbols, values and perceptions of city, region and dialect involved in the local construction of identity needed to be explored. Understanding 'identity' in Mendoza-Denton's (2002: 475) terms as 'the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signaled through language and other semiotic means', it was predicted that the Sunderland community was bound to define itself with respect to the North-eastern socio-cultural and political context. In this respect, Sunderland was likely to be an interesting area for this sociolinguistic work given the social and political changes it has undergone in the past 30 years.

The City of Sunderland is situated on the mouth of the river Wear, around 15 miles to the south of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and just under 30 miles to the north of the Teesside conurbation. With a population of 280,807 in the 2001 Census,² it is the second largest city in the North-east after Newcastle. Sunderland is one of the many boroughs/areas in the region that were affected by the reorganisation of county boundaries of 1974. Until then, Sunderland in particular had been part of County Durham, an area whose northern boundary was marked by the River Tyne. However, with the reorganisation of the regional boundaries, Sunderland became part of the new metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear. At the same time, other mining towns/districts that until then had been part of County Durham too (e.g. Washington, Houghton-le-Spring, Hetton-le-Hole and Fence Houses) were re-aligned as part of the metropolitan borough of the City of Sunderland.

Arguably, these political changes impacted on the local social identity not only of Sunderland people, who now were part of a new county together with Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but also of the inhabitants of Washington, Houghton, Hetton, etc., who were not only part of a new county now but also of the Sunderland borough. Historically, the river Tyne had served as a political boundary between County Durham and Northumberland. However, with the creation of Tyne and Wear the river ceased to be a political divide and peoples to the north and south of this landmark

² *National Statistics* website – 'Census 2001 – Sunderland'. Available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/00cm.asp>

were administratively brought together by the new political boundaries. Thus, Tyne and Wear was constituted by five metropolitan boroughs: Newcastle-upon-Tyne and North Tyneside (on the northern bank of the Tyne) and South Tyneside, Gateshead and the City of Sunderland (to the south of the Tyne). This meant that the county became home to both Wearsiders (Sunderland people) and Tynesiders (popularly known as 'Mackems' and 'Geordies' respectively), two communities with strong local identities and which seem to have a long-standing rivalry.

Thus, in the examination of the local identity it was necessary to ascertain to what extent Sunderland people from different generations and different areas identify with the 1974 boundaries and how each of them views their community and engages in the construction of a local identity. It was expected that different generations would exhibit different orientations towards Sunderland and the surrounding areas (in particular Tyneside and Durham). Even though it is 30 years since the reformation of the boundaries, it is predicted that many in the older generations, in particular those who had experienced the reorganisation of boundaries, would still retain a strong sentimental link to County Durham and a stronger local affiliation. By contrast, the younger speakers, having only known Sunderland as part of Tyne and Wear, would not display such orientation towards County Durham. Moreover, the improvement of public transport links between Sunderland and Newcastle is likely to have favoured communication between the two cities; therefore, whilst the younger generation will still show a local affiliation and a willingness to mark the boundary between their community and that of the Geordies, it is likely that they will show a stronger orientation towards Tyneside as a cultural and social centre and have relatively more contact with the Tyneside community.

Once some insight has been obtained into how different speakers construct their identities and define their position with respect to the local community and to other groups in the North-east, we are in a position to account for the social meaning of variation in Sunderland as it is expected that the speakers' language usage and other social practices will be a reflection of their active engagement in the construction of their individual and collective identities.

A secondary aim of this study of variation in Sunderland, which stemmed from Sunderland people's narratives of language difference, was actually to determine the level of detail and accuracy of these folk-linguistic perceptions of difference at a local and regional level. To investigate this, an element of perceptual dialectology was

introduced in this study which sheds some light into Sunderland speakers' mental maps of different dialect areas in the North-east and their awareness of (or ability to identify) specific patterns of variation. As a result of this interest in folk-linguistic awareness, the linguistic variables analysed in this study are some of those which according to the Sunderland informants are realised differently in Sunderland and other North-eastern varieties (mainly, TE and Durham English). This allows us to ascertain to what extent narratives of difference are based on actual linguistic usage.

Let us turn now to briefly outline the structure of this Sunderland study:

Chapter 2 gives a general outline of how language variation and change has been approached in the past 50 years. For this purpose, Eckert's (2005) division of variationist studies into three waves is employed. Given the central place that the construction of meaning occupies in the Sunderland study, Eckert's is a rather convenient construct that, rather than focusing on how variationist research has interpreted language difference and change in progress, allows us to focus on the construction of local/social meaning through language and how sociolinguistic studies have investigated it. Thus, important sociolinguistic issues such as social categorisations, speaker agency and methodological approaches are discussed in this chapter. This will provide a theoretical background for the Sunderland study and will help justify the language ideological approach adopted in it. This approach, proposed by Milroy (2000, 2004a), takes language ideologies as central to any socially meaningful account of language variation and change.

The data-collection method used in this study is introduced in chapter 3. The method was the one devised by Llamas (2001) for the Survey of Regional English and, ultimately, for her own study of language variation in Teesside, North-east England, given that this is a very flexible method and in Middlesbrough proved to be useful for the study of both language and identity. Throughout the chapter, I introduce the various elements of the methodology in the form in which they were implemented in Sunderland, and present the Sunderland population sample – how big the sample was, how it was stratified and how informants were recruited. Finally, some details about the fieldwork are given which include problems that arose in the data-collection process and decisions made to resolve those problems or lessen the impact they would have on the research.

The area under investigation – i.e. the City of Sunderland – and its community are introduced in detail at the start of chapter 4. Here, the political boundaries of the locality and changes they have undergone in the last few decades are examined and compared to the boundaries of the community as Sunderland people perceive them (that is, political and ideological boundaries are contrasted). Having defined the limits of the community, I move on to explore what it is that these boundaries encompass by examining some of the qualitative attitudinal data collected in Sunderland. The examination of people's attitudes towards their city and their region, their dialect and other local symbols (e.g. the local football team) sheds some light on how the local identity is constructed and thus what it is that leads this local community to regard itself as a cohesive meaning-making social unit. In the process of explaining the local identity, Sunderland reveals itself as a heterogeneous community where people differ in the way in which they orient themselves towards their place and community and, as a result, display different levels of local affiliation. Thus, in the last section of this chapter I attempt to produce a classification of the informants which reflects the strength of their local affiliation.

Chapter 5 finally turns to explore the Sunderland variety more closely. Here, we start discussing the idea that people's mental maps of dialect areas will vary depending on their level of familiarity with the dialect areas that they are trying to delimit, and thus giving some consideration to the fact that whereas outsiders to the North-east generally refer to all North-easterners' language as 'Geordie', North-easterners seem to be able to identify different varieties within the region. These mental maps are compared to variationists' classification of the North-eastern dialect areas to determine the degree of overlap between them. Secondly, a brief review of dialect research conducted in the North-east in the past few decades is offered, before turning the focus of our attention to how the Sunderland informants define the variety they speak and how much language variation and difference they are able to perceive at a local and regional level. This will allow us to identify some of the language features that are perceived to distinguish the Sunderland variety from other North-eastern varieties. And, as we will see, it is from these features that the variables analysed in the present study were selected. Furthermore, this examination of Sunderland people's perception of difference and variation will lead to a discussion of levels or modes of folk-linguistic awareness which will question the extent to which non-linguists' meta-linguistic comments are accurate or reliable.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present and discuss the linguistic findings in relation to the local socio-cultural ideologies involved in the construction of the local identity and how Sunderland people use these ideologies to define their community and distinguish themselves from 'Other' regional groupings. Each of these chapters starts with a review of past research into each of the variables analysed and the evidence of variation and change reported in it. Then the data is scrutinised in order to discover any patterns of variation present in it. In this process of analysis, the effect various social variables may exert on local speakers' language usage is explored. Thus, the data are analysed in relation to age and gender to reveal any evidence of language change over time and of gendered patterns of variation. To avoid taking a very essentialist approach to variation and neglecting important variation within the speaker groups, intra-group variation is also taken into consideration in order to identify speakers who may consistently present different patterns of language usage from the other individuals in their speaker groups and, thus, try to find an explanation for their language use. Motivations for language variation are also sought in the speakers' occupational group and in how strongly they affiliate to the local community.

Chapter 9 turns to interpret the sociolinguistic patterns identified in the analysis of the linguistic data, in the light of the attitudinal data discussed in chapters 4 and 5, with the intention of providing a locally meaningful account of local language variation. It is predicted that the speakers' sense of local allegiance and orientation (or lack of) towards their other regional groups will be reflected in their language usage. Finally, this chapter draws together the conclusions of this study into the language and identity of Sunderland; it evaluates its findings and the methods employed; lastly, it highlights possible avenues for future research.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background and Approach Employed in this Sunderland Study

This chapter aims to do three things: first, it will summarise the various approaches to language variation employed over the past 50 years; second, it will explore the language ideological framework adopted by contemporary variationists in recent studies; and third, it will outline how the research undertaken in Sunderland has synthesised core elements from a variety of approaches to variation.

In the first instance, I will principally discuss Eckert's (2005) classification of variation studies into three waves. This construct divides variationist research according to the approach to, and analysis of, language variation, and how social meaning has been ascertained. As we will see, whilst first wave studies (or survey studies) are concerned with mapping variation onto socio-demographic categories, second and third wave studies (typically ethnographic) propose that in order to find an explanation for the social meaning of variation the researcher must turn to the speakers' local environment and social, cultural and linguistic ideologies and experiences.

Following on from this, I will explore in more detail the language ideological framework proposed by Lesley Milroy (2000, 2004) and subsequently employed by contemporary variationists (e.g. Llamas 2001). This framework acknowledges that there is a need to integrate the study of language attitudes into language variation research. This focusing on language attitudes should enable the researcher to account for the local meaning of language variation patterns.

Lastly, relating to the original research conducted in this thesis, this chapter will explain and justify the adoption of this language ideological framework in the study of language variation and identity in Sunderland. In addition to this, the final section will endeavour to position this study vis-à-vis the three waves of variationist research as outlined by Eckert.

2.1 SOCIOLINGUISTICS: APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

The rise of sociolinguistics in the second half of the 20th century came about as a result of the growing desire to study language in relation to the social contexts in which it is used and to recognise language as a naturally variable system. The second half of the 20th century saw the rise of Chomsky's generative theories, developed from Saussure's structuralist paradigm. This linguistic theory treated speech communities as completely homogeneous and thus focused upon an idealised linguistic competence, as Chomsky explains:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (Chomsky 1965: 3)

Both structuralists and generativists focused on this abstract and idealised knowledge of language and disregarded any deviation from it as unimportant for the study of language.

In the 1960s, however, Uriel Weinreich, William Labov and Marvin I. Herzog condemned this view of speech communities as 'unrealistic' and as 'a backward step from structural theories capable of accommodating the facts of orderly heterogeneity' (1968: 100). They advocated the importance of adopting an approach which brought together the synchronic and diachronic study of language and acknowledged linguistic heterogeneity as an essential component in the study of language change:

[I]f a language has to be structured in order to function efficiently, how do people continue to talk while the language changes, that is, while it passes through periods of lessened systematicity? (Weinreich et al. 1968: 100)

Weinreich *et al.* actually referred to linguistic variation as systematic and ordered, rather than as random and unpredictable, and identified periods of variable linguistic usage as those in which language is undergoing change. In their view, this orderly heterogeneity within speech communities needed to be accounted for in order to explain how language has developed between two stages, and this is precisely what variationist studies have concentrated on. Having acknowledged heterogeneity as an inherent property of language, they concern themselves with how language may vary between different social contexts, how external/social factors may constrain its usage,

and how new forms may systematically spread through society. This discipline has developed on the basis of Weinreich, Labov and Herzog's belief that:

One of the corollaries of our approach is that in a language serving a complex (i.e., real) community, it is *absence* of structured heterogeneity that would be dysfunctional (1968: 101).

In the study of the relationship between language and society, and how the former varies to adapt to different social contexts or to index different social meanings, various different analytic approaches have developed over the last 50 years. These approaches have not developed consecutively in the history of this discipline, but have very much overlapped in time, so none of them has emerged to replace a previous one. They basically differ in the strength of the connection to social disciplines like sociology, anthropology and even education. Eckert (2005) suggests that these different ways of exploring language variation can be classified into three 'waves' of sociolinguistic analytic practice, which she presents as equally valuable traditions within this discipline. This is a convenient construct as it shows rather explicitly how different studies have looked into the social meaning of linguistic variation. Thus, given the central place that the construction of meaning and identity occupy in the Sunderland study, the remainder of this section reviews each of these waves of variationist studies. This will not only draw an overall picture of how sociolinguistics has evolved since its emergence, but will also prove to be an extremely useful construct to locate the present study in the wider field of sociolinguistics.

2.1.1 First wave of variation studies

This first wave of variationist study founded the discipline of sociolinguistics in the 1960s. Labov's study of the *Social Stratification of English in New York City* (1966) and Trudgill's *Social Differentiation of English in Norwich* (1974) are two of its most representative studies. The data collection in such studies has typically been conducted in the form of surveys in order to allow for comparability of language usage across speakers. Then the researcher, employing quantitative methods of analysis, has aimed to determine the correlation between language and demographic

categories such as age, gender, social class and ethnicity. These studies are therefore often referred to as *survey* studies.¹

Sociolinguists have demonstrated that linguistic structures do not exclusively convey referential meanings – i.e. language does not only denote ideals, events and/or entities that exist in the world – it also conveys non-referential meanings, and more particularly social meanings (Mesthrie *et al.* 2000: 6). First-wave scholars maintain that language and language structures are indexical of the speakers' social background (e.g. the region they come from, their social class, status, age, gender, etc). They have found that certain non-standard and geographically and ethnically distinctive linguistic features tend to be characteristic of certain social groups, which has been interpreted as proof that language usage in a community tends to reflect its social stratification and divisions.

These studies are mostly concerned with exploring (a) language usage in big urban population centres, more specifically the patterns of linguistic variation that emerge from comparing speakers from different social groups in these urban centres and their different speech styles; and (b) the spread of linguistic change across society. Speakers are grouped into rather broad social categories such as working-class men, middle-class men, working-class women and so on. As a result, rather broad linguistic generalisations stating, for example, that women use more standard variants than men, or working class (WC) men use more non-standard forms than any other social group have arisen from these studies, and with time they have become widely accepted statements amongst variationists.

One such feature that exhibits clear patterns of both class and gender stratification is the use of [ɪn], instead of [ɪŋ], for the present participle ending (-ing) in informal and casual styles in many varieties of English (e.g. *walkin'*, *runnin'*). As figure 2.1 and table 2.1 show, both in Philadelphia (Labov 2001) and Norwich (Trudgill 1974), men showed more frequent usage of the [ɪn] variant than women in casual style. Moreover, in both of Trudgill's gender groups and in Labov's female group, there is a clear class stratification of the variable: the frequency of the non-standard variant decreases as we move towards the higher end of the socio-economic continuum.

¹ Note, however, that whilst quantitative methods are employed in this first wave of variationist studies, they have also been widely employed in the ethnographic studies of the type that characterise the second and third waves.

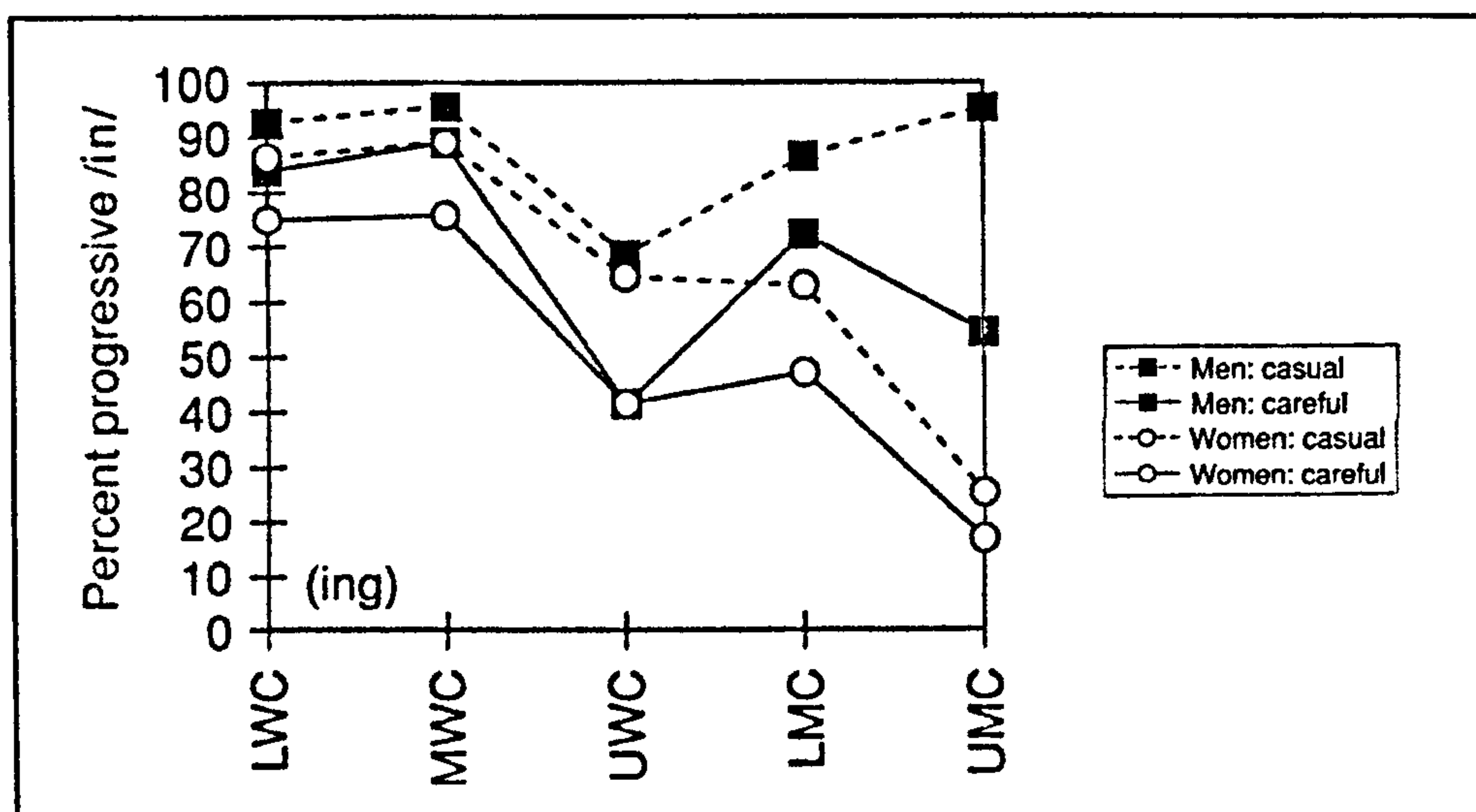


Figure 2.1: Distribution of the /in/ variant by gender and social class in Labov's Philadelphia study (2001: 265)

MMC	M	031
	F	000
LMC	M	017
	F	067
UWC	M	095
	F	077
MWC	M	097
	F	088
LWC	M	100
	F	100

Table 2.1: Use of the [ŋ] variant of (ng) in casual style in Norwich (Trudgill 1974: 94)

Trudgill found this same gender and class stratification in most of the variables he examined in Norwich. Yet, he did not find this particularly surprising. He attributed gender differences to the fact that women's less stable position in society, which resulted from their exclusion from the employment market, made them more status-conscious. As a consequence, they needed other ways of showing their socio-economic status, which would justify their greater concern with avoiding certain linguistic variants. Trudgill further argued that the use of the vernacular as the language of the working class tends to be associated with toughness and, by extension, with masculinity (1974: 93-95).

However, as Eckert (1989) points out, even though this kind of generalisation has dominated variationist research and large-scale surveys have more often than not obtained similar results, reversed patterns have also emerged, i.e. women have also been found to use more non-standard forms. Labov (1990) found that, at least for phonological variables, whether or not women are ahead of men in the use of non-standard variants depends on the stability of such variables. He points out that generally they will use fewer non-standard forms if the variables are stable and generally clearly stigmatised. By contrast, they will generally lead men in the introduction of new variants as long as they carry local prestige but no stigma. This, Labov argued, seems to depend largely on their evaluation of the different variants:

[B]oth conservative and innovative behaviours reflect women's superior sensitivity to the social evaluation of language. In stable situations, women perceive and react to prestige or stigma more strongly than men do, and when change begins, women are quicker and more forceful in employing the new social symbolism, whatever it might be (Labov 2001: 279-293)

The question here is whether these patterns or exceptions which seem to contradict the norm should be treated as atypical and therefore ignored, or whether they are as relevant as the 'usual' ones. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) argue that both 'typical' patterns and 'exceptions' should be considered if we want to attest the validity of the above-mentioned generalisations. The type of variationist studies examined so far have found both 'intragroup differences' (i.e. differences among men and among women) and 'intergroup overlap' (i.e. similarities in language use between males and females). Nevertheless, few have taken these similarities and differences into account in order to provide insightful explanations of gendered linguistic usage. Neither have they paid much attention to individuals, rather than groups of speakers (or social categorisations). Furthermore, although their focus of attention was mainly gender, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet state in more general terms that '[t]he practice of aggregating speakers, particularly according to sex and socio-economic class, tends to homogenize a broad range of uses, masking extreme uses at either end of the variation spectrum' (1999: 194). Thus, the compelling need to explore both intragroup differences and intergroup overlap stimulated the emergence of the second wave.

All in all large-scale survey studies have largely been confined to identifying linguistic variants as markers of different predetermined demographic categories (mostly age, class and gender), from which they have gone on to draw broad

generalisations and to conclude that there is a direct link between different linguistic variants and social groups. The interpretation of this direct link has generally relied upon the researcher's linguistic intuitions. Therefore, whereas standard variants are regarded as unmarked, non-standard variants are judged to carry a marked social meaning (Eckert 2002: 5). However, as Eckert indicates, 'explanations for variation are to be found in the culture of class and gender, and further [...] the avoidance of stigma is not the only form of agency in variation' (2005: 5). Thus, the disclosure of patterns that do not conform to the expected general trends usually obtained in first wave studies called for closer examination of the internal local dynamics of the social categories studied. This is precisely what studies which Eckert classes as second wave have tried to account for, as we see in the following section.

2.1.2 Second wave of variation studies

Whereas first wave survey studies focus on how language variation relates to broad socio-demographic categories, second-wave studies aim to investigate the local social organisation of the communities under observation and/or the social meanings linguistic variants acquire in such communities; that is, how language usage accounts for the social organisation of different communities. This approach moves away from predetermined (broad) socio-demographic categories and seeks to actually identify social categories which are salient for the communities under study:

These categories may be local instantiations of the primary categories that guide the survey studies, they may be different categories – but most important, the categories are discovered in virtue of their place in local social practice (Eckert 2005: 5)

So although, like first wave studies, second-wave studies also focus on the geographically defined speech communities as language-based units of analysis, they differ from the former type in that they have moved away from a focus on those abstract categories which are used to reflect the social order in western communities towards actual concrete locally constructed groupings which, by contrast, are considered to be locally important and meaningful in the social organisation of the local community. Like in first wave studies, linguistic variables are examined in order to find their social meaning. However, second-wave studies do not correlate them with abstract demographic categories, but with the locally-defined ones, which may

just be local instantiations of the universal demographic categories. Thus, variants are regarded as indexes of affiliation to local groups, a view which, Eckert explains:

brings the class correlations down closer to concrete experience, and illustrates the positive value of both the vernacular and resistance to the vernacular, depending on the place of the particular networks in the political economy (Eckert 2005: 10).

In this sense, studies within this second wave have contested Labov's sociolinguistic model which implies that (i) there is a social class continuum which is closely linked to linguistic stratification; and (ii) there is consensus in speech communities about the social meaning and value of particular variants. This model proposes that the use of non-standard variants, for example, will increase progressively as we go down the socio-economic scale. Furthermore, notwithstanding the different usage rates of each variant by different socio-economic groups, it is expected that variants will have the same social meaning or value for the whole speech community. Second-wave studies, however, have provided a strong pointer towards the indexicality of language by demonstrating that language features only correlate with local groupings and demographic categories in so far as they index the social experience, ideologies and stances that are important for those groupings.

The shift towards a more sociological perspective necessitated the adoption of a different methodological approach: ethnography. Ethnography involves observing communities for extended periods of time, engaging in social interaction and disclosing any possible locally salient social categories and behavioural patterns (Saville-Troike 1982: 1-11). Rather than presupposing social categories and setting off to find enough subjects to represent each of these categories, ethnographers *look for* local groupings. The qualitative descriptive data collected through this method should reveal not only communication patterns and their connection to other socio-cultural practices, but ultimately provide an insight into how social meaning is locally constructed. This stands in stark contrast with researchers in the first wave, who despite their endeavour to record natural informal speech, are usually unable to ascertain its social significance 'in the absence of ethnographic knowledge about social norms governing linguistic choice in the situation recorded' (Gumperz 1970: 9 in Saville-Troike 1982: 7). Thus, they explain linguistic variation on the basis of their own intuitions. Ethnographers, however, seek to find explanations within the data collected in the community itself. Furthermore, since different communities construct

meaning differently, the information collected in one community would not be necessarily valid to explain the behaviour of other speech communities.

In their Belfast study, James and Lesley Milroy (1978) used an ethnographic approach to examine the use of local vernacular features in three relatively dense and multiplex working class communities. Social network studies, as Milroy (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 119-121) indicates, tend to focus on relatively small social groups with the consequence that it is not possible to classify their members according to their social class. Thus, this approach looks into the relationship between strength of each speaker's ties to the community and linguistic variation, which involves an analysis of inter-speaker variation rather than intergroup variation. As had been hypothesised (Milroy 1987a), even when age, gender and class were kept constant, the higher the individual's degree of integration in the local social networks, the greater was the use of vernacular variants. Dense and multiplex ties seemed to enforce the speaker's adherence to the local variants and an opposition to any institutional standardising pressures. These community members were mainly those whose kinship, work and friendship ties were largely confined to the local community. So with no outside contacts, they were very locally oriented (Milroy 1982; Milroy and Milroy 1985). This study provided evidence that usage of vernacular features is not determined by membership of universal socio-demographic categories but by the informant's position and ties within a local community.²

As we have seen in this section, although second-wave studies are still concerned with finding a correlation between particular variables and social groups, they do not regard speakers as caught within fixed and predetermined social categories and their linguistic behaviour as determined by this membership. Instead, these studies emphasise the need to look into the speech community's internal dynamics and determine how linguistic variation indexes the different locally-defined social categories. The way in which individuals use language therefore is conceived as a way of claiming membership in particular local groupings.

² Labov's study of Martha's Vineyard could also be regarded as a second-wave study as it provided some pointers towards the indexicality of language. This, which was his MA dissertation and which he conducted before his New York study, predates other second-wave studies. Thus, whilst it could be seen as representing a period before his theories were fully formed, the fact that it fits within the second-wave approach may offer proof that Eckert did not regard her three waves of variationist study as existing consecutively but as co-existing approaches.

2.1.3 Third-wave studies

Although third-wave studies do not reject the notion of ‘speech community’, they do not consider it their main focus of attention as studies in the first and second waves do. The speech community has proven to be largely unproblematic in first and second-wave studies, since these are mainly concerned with investigating how social categories (either abstract pre-determined ones in the case of first wave studies or locally-defined ones in the case of second-wave studies) account for language variation in a community whose boundaries have been delimited beforehand on rather artificial terms (generally geographical). Third-wave studies, however, have implemented a reversal in the direction of analysis: rather than using social information and local meanings to account for linguistic variation, they are more interested in how linguistic structures can help to understand social groups. Language is regarded not just as a system used to convey referential meanings, but also as a social practice that indexes different local social meanings and identities. Speakers are regarded as agents involved in a process of shaping their language to project their identities or memberships in different social groupings, rather than as ‘automatons caught up in an abstract sociolinguistic system’ (Milroy 2004a: 167) or ‘clones’ or ‘performers of group norms’ (Eckert 2000: 44-45).

This new trajectory in sociolinguistic studies called for the adoption of a new framework based on a completely different social unit: the *community of practice*. This concept was developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) as part of their social theory of learning, but was later introduced into language and gender research by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992, 2003). Community of practice (henceforth CofP) refers to ‘an aggregate of people who, united by a common enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, and values – in short, practices’ (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999: 186). This is based on the assumption that, in their everyday life, people become involved in socially significant groups: e.g. football teams, work colleagues, family, school friends, and so on. People generally participate in a number of CofPs and it is through their engagement in these that they construct their identities and define and negotiate their place in society. Because of this:

[a] community of practice is not a unit, like a social category, that exists on one level and to which speakers can be assigned. [...] [S]peakers belong to multiple communities of practice on multiple levels (Eckert 2000: 171).

The members of each of these groups engage in common activities and share beliefs, knowledge, ways of talking, styles of dressing, etc. They also develop their own ways of engaging with the other members of the group. These are all social practices that determine their place within the CofP as well as their position with respect to other CofPs and society in general. So the CofP is not just an isolated unit: on the contrary, it constructs meaning on the basis of its own social practices and those of other CofPs. Consequently, it needs to be considered in relation to the wider social context within which it exists (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999, 2003).

Eckert (2000) implemented this framework based on practice theory in her study of the social order in Belten High School in Detroit. Using the ethnographic method known as 'participant observation', she identified two different social categories that, through their social practices, constructed opposed stances within the school's social order: jocks and burnouts. The jocks were those students who adhered to school norms and tended to engage in school activities (e.g. athletics, cheerleading, student council and so on). It was within the school environment that they built their identity, social networks and social life. By contrast, the burnouts rejected the school norms and authority and developed their identity and social practices outside the school in the neighbourhoods or the urban areas. They usually hung around in the streets and were involved in a rougher life-style which included street fights, use of illegal substances etc. Thus, whereas the jocks were institutionally oriented, the burnouts were more locally oriented.

Given that language is one of the social practices that define these CofPs, third-wave studies aim to explore the link between a speaker's linguistic competence and the local community at large. This link is shaped by the hierarchical superposition of all the CofPs in which the individual participates, from those that occupy a central place in the individual's construction of identity to those that may have a more peripheral role, and ultimately to what Eckert refers to as 'the imagined community that is the English speaking world' (2005: 16). Different individuals participate in a different range of CofPs and decide which communities play a more important role in their everyday life. By doing this, they are constructing their own identity and defining their place differently in the speech community. This, therefore, suggests that variationist studies should account for the role of individuals within their CofPs, as

well as locate the CofPs within the wider context in which they operate. In general, Eckert argues that:

[w]ithin the confines of the studies of variation, which limit themselves to fairly limited geographic entities, the link must be established between the individual speaker's day-to-day experience and abstract categories such as class, gender and ethnicity – and the socio-geographic unit that is taken to be the speech community. Ultimately we need to connect these to the larger imagined communities (Eckert 2005: 16)

Language is one of the social practices that characterises each CofP and, therefore, it can be expected to vary from one community to another. Each CofP constructs its own distinctive linguistic style adapting the linguistic resources (i.e. variants) available in the speech community at large. Thus, each CofP that exists within the same speech community will generally use a particular combination of these linguistic features. Bearing this in mind, studies of variation would need to focus on styles – rather than individual variables – and ultimately examine how locally available variants are combined and used to construct local meaning. Generally, Eckert argues, people are more likely to identify styles rather than individual variables that characterise the speech of a particular social group:

We have constructs in mind like Valley Girls, New York Jews, Mafiosi, Rappers, Southern Belles – persona types that constitute an ideological social landscape. The variables that characterize the varieties associated with these types do not themselves generally mean “Valley Girl, New York Jew” etc., but combine to produce those meanings. In other words, the meaning of variation lies in its role in the construction of styles, and studying the role of variation in stylistic practice not simply placing variables in styles, but in understanding this placement as an integral part of the construction of social meaning (Eckert 2005: 24).

In her study in Belten High, Eckert (2000) explored how Belten High students used locally available sociolinguistic variants to construct social meaning, and found that they revealed a close correlation with social practices and ideologies in which the students engaged. This meant that variants only indexed a social category in as much as the social practice(s) they indexed were constitutive of that social category.

Traditionally, in the previous two sociolinguistic waves, individual variants are regarded as markers of certain social categories. For example, /h/-dropping is a heavily stigmatised feature in British English (BrE) which is usually regarded as a marker of working-class speech. However, Ochs (1992), a linguistic anthropologist,

questions the existence of a direct link between linguistic variants and social categories, arguing that linguistic choices generally index social categories indirectly. It is not enough to look merely into correlations between language and social variables, since speakers do not use particular linguistic variants to show their gender or their social class. Rather, linguistic features are chosen by speakers because they are primarily and directly associated with particular social meanings, activities or stances which, in turn, are considered characteristic of some social group. So variants indirectly index social categories via their direct association with some general social ideology.³ In the light of this, Eckert (2005: 23), for example, argues that [əŋ] (with alveolar [ŋ] rather than velar [ŋ]) for *-ing*, rather than being an index of lower socio-economic status, is regarded as an index of 'casualness'. This linguistic marker would therefore recursively link to categories of gender or class, due to its association with the kind of stances and activities in which individuals from different community groupings engage in their construction of their own personae. Similarly, we may argue that women will not use more Standard English (StE) variants in order to reflect their femininity, but because these variants are indexes of refined behaviour and this is a feature which in many societies is valued in women – yet, is not exclusive to women. Men also use standard features, but in this case their linguistic choice would not be ruled by a willingness to indirectly index femininity. Standard features may also be used to index other social meanings or stances: for instance, speakers, either male or female, may use them to place themselves in a more socially powerful position with respect to another speaker, or maybe to show a high level of formality. Linguistic variables can therefore index more than one social meaning, and we, as speakers, have been socialised to interpret these meanings and use language to reproduce them, either consciously or unconsciously.

According to this model, then, the linguistic features characteristic of the speech of a CofP are not markers of the CofP itself, but are linked to the social practices and ideologies through which such groups construct meaning. Moreover, even members from different categories who engage in similar practices or who share certain ideologies will, as a result, show similarities in language use. Eckert (2000, 2005), for example, found that individuals who engaged in cruising in some areas of Detroit

³ As section 2.2 will demonstrate, the language ideological framework adopted for the Sunderland study also views ideologies as the indirect link between language and social categories.

showed a higher use of urban variants than those who did not engage in this activity. Cruising was a social practice that reflected adventurousness and an urban orientation. It was regarded as a typically 'burnout' practice; however, it was not exclusively confined to this social category. Some 'in-betweens' (those who were neither burnouts nor jocks but who shared characteristics with jocks and/or burnouts) also participated in this type of activity and revealed a higher use of urban variants than in-betweens who did not cruise.

Further evidence that linguistic variation is related to social practices, rather than with category affiliation, was found in the fact that some linguistic features revealed different levels of usage within the same social categories. Within the jocks, the athletic boys showed a higher level of negative concord usage than non-athlete boys. Eckert justified this on the grounds that both were very close friendship groups. However, whereas the former tended to be indicative of a tough persona, the latter, generally involved in the student government, needed to portray a 'corporate image' (Eckert 2005: 19-20).

The distinction between second and third waves is probably the hardest one to grasp. Both of them seem to focus on social networks; however, the key difference lies in the perspective adopted to analyse them. Whereas second-wave studies focus mainly on the strength of the links that make up social networks and on claims of affiliation to them, third-wave studies focus on the processes whereby social clusters become meaningful. We need to remember, nevertheless, that these are not clearly differentiated approaches. The idea of classifying sociolinguistic studies into three 'waves' was Eckert's construct. It is a useful way to examine the lines along which variationist research has developed over the last 50 years. However, the categories are not mutually exclusive, and thus studies may borrow elements from the three of them.

The three approaches outlined (see table 2.2 for a summary) consider different levels at which social meaning is constructed. Whereas the meaning of social variation in the first wave is located in universal socio-demographic categories which are taken as 'given', and thus language forms are taken as direct indexes of these groupings, second and third-wave studies situate the motivations for language differentiation and change at the level of concrete social values, stances and ideologies which are ultimately adopted by individuals and/or groups in the construction of their social identities. The present Sunderland study, as the following sections will show, identifies valuable elements in all three waves. This study does not

rule out the exploration of language variation across different socio-demographic categories, since this may give a starting point when trying to establish how language usage varies within a community. However, speakers will not be seen as clones who reproduce communal language norms (Eckert 2000: 44-45). Instead, individual speakers are treated as active social agents who adopt particular social practices (in particular, language features) because these are associated with the ideologies or stances characteristic of a particular group and thus are indirect indexes of the user's membership in a particular local/regional social group. Therefore, like those in the second and third waves, the Sunderland study tries to ascertain what ideologies may motivate Sunderland speakers to converge with, or diverge (linguistically) from, groups in their region. For this, local social and language values and ideologies are examined in this study alongside language variation.

First wave	Second wave	Third wave
<i>Large survey studies of geographically defined communities</i>	<i>Ethnographic studies of geographically defined communities</i>	<i>Ethnographic studies of communities of practice</i>
<i>The socio-economic hierarchy as a map of social space</i>	<i>Local categories as links to demographics</i>	<i>Local categories as built on common stances</i>
<i>Variables as markers of primary social categories and carrying class-based prestige/stigma</i>	<i>Variables as indexing locally-defined categories</i>	<i>Variables as indexing stances, activities, characteristics</i>
<i>Style as attention paid to speech, and controlled by orientation to prestige/stigma</i>	<i>Style as acts of affiliation</i>	<i>Style as persona construction</i>

Table 2.2: Three sociolinguistic waves (This table collates the main features highlighted by Eckert (2005) for each wave in her online article (pp. 3, 15, 30))

Milroy (2000, 2004) argues for the importance of integrating language attitudes in accounts of language variation and change since language attitudes, which, she argues, are 'manifestations of locally constructed language ideologies' (2004: 161), will allow us to produce socially meaningful explanations for local language usage and change. She, therefore, proposes a language ideological framework to account for the indexicality of language in variationist research. The next section introduces this

framework, which is the one adopted for the Sunderland study. Although this framework has not been widely implemented, a number of variationists have adopted it in recent years given its capacity to integrate attitudinal issues as an indispensable element in any attempt to account for language variation and change. Thus, various studies (e.g. Llamas 2000 and Dyer and Wassink 2001) in which this approach has been implemented are reviewed in due course.

2.2 LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY: AN IDEOLOGICAL MODEL FOR THE STUDY OF THE INDEXICALITY OF LANGUAGE

Whilst we cannot deny that in their concern for providing an explanation for language differentiation, sociolinguists have demonstrated a clear awareness of the importance of language ideologies, a matter of concern has emerged in more recent variationist research. This relates to how we actually situate these ideologies used to explain the indexical link between a particular language form and a social group. As we have seen in section 2.1, generally, traditional variationist research has focused on establishing the link between the language form and a particular social group on the basis of quantitative analysis of data systematically collected from the speech community. Then this link has usually been interpreted on the basis of general mainstream ideologies. However, it is not clear whose language ideologies these are: whether they are ideologies held by the speakers themselves or, on the contrary, they have been forged by linguists on the basis of their own 'expert' and speaker intuitions.

Let us take as an example the social stratification generally found in the distribution of the two variants of the suffix (-ing), [ɪŋ] and [əŋ]. This variable is typically regarded as a sociolinguistic marker of socio-economic status and of different speech styles, due to the fact that variationist research (e.g. Trudgill 1974) has typically found a strong correlation between usage of [əŋ] (with alveolar [ŋ] rather than velar [ŋ]) and working class speakers in all speech styles. Moreover, the difference between working and middle classes in the use of this variant becomes larger as the formality of the speech situation decreases. This indexical link evokes a universal ideology whereby [əŋ] is a stigmatised variant that carries connotations of lower class status and casual/unmonitored speech.

This essentialist approach to sociolinguistic variation is arguably rather problematic on various accounts. Firstly, it has focused on a series of predetermined and universal social categorisations (age, gender, social class) and assumed that speakers' language use is a by-product of their membership of these groupings. However, there is no indication of how important these groupings may be in the speakers' day-to-day interaction and construction of identity. Secondly, language use within each of these social categories has been presented as homogeneous: there has been no attention to inter-group variation or to individual speakers. Thirdly, variation has been explained on the basis of the most visible dominant ideologies. But not only that, the same ideologies have been used to explain language variation in different community groupings. All in all, then, there has been a tendency in this 'top-down' approach to disregard the local environment as the 'locus' where the meaning of sociolinguistic variation is constructed.

This does not mean that there are no variationist studies which have acknowledged the importance of the local values, meanings and categorisations in accounts of language variation. We only need to go all the way back to Labov's Martha's Vineyard study (1972b) to find an example of a study which tried to use local attitudes to account for the centralised variants of diphthongs in HOUSE and RIGHT characteristic of the local accent. Thanks to its insular location, the Martha's Vineyard community remained relatively isolated and independent from the mainland economy up to the 60s. However, when Labov conducted his study, he found that the community was beginning to feel the effects of mainland tourist immigration to the island. As a result, the local population seemed to be divided into two groups which demonstrated opposed views on this invasion. On the one hand, there were those who regarded this tourist immigration as a chance for the insular economy to benefit from a new economic sector which would establish links with the mainland economy. On the other hand, there were those who opposed this outside incursion. By contrast with the former groups, these were more locally oriented and were in favour of preserving a traditional locally-based economy. Most of these were members of the fishing communities.

After looking into the insular linguistic variety, Labov (1972) noticed that a reversal of an ongoing historical linguistic change seemed to be taking place. Whilst one of the most traditional local phonological features of the local variety had been

the use of raised and centralised nuclei in /ay/ and /aw/ (i.e. [eɪ] or [əɪ], and [eʊ] or [əʊ]), in more recent generations these seemed to have been converging towards the mainland lowered nucleus, [a]. In his attempt to provide an explanation for this linguistic change, he found that universal categories such as age, gender and class failed to provide an explanation for this seemingly counter-historical centralisation of these diphthongs. Instead, it seemed that, as a result of the tourist incursions, the locals who opposed this outside influence, particularly the fishing communities, appeared to resort to locally salient features, like the use of raised nuclei in /ay/ and /aw/ to mark the distinction between insiders and outsiders. Those who, on the contrary, were less locally oriented used the lowered variants. The two variants, therefore, came to index the two different local ideologies: the raised one stopped being a geographical variant stereotypical of the island and became mainly associated to the local fishing communities, symbolising that particular lifestyle in the island and ultimately a 'Vineyard' orientation; and the lower variants were associated with non-fishing local groups which were more open to outside influence and even considered the possibility of moving to the mainland (e.g. young speakers who considered continuing their education away from the island). The problem, however, lies perhaps in the post-hoc treatment that local ideologies have often received in this type of study. They have only been brought into play rather conveniently when they provided a suitable explanation for the sociolinguistic patterns identified. Moreover, often these ideologies or attitudes used to explain the meaning of variation have not been systematically attested in the communities under study.

More recent variationist research has tried to rectify this by using methodologies that allowed us to (i) treat identity and language ideologies as an integral part of our interpretation of variation and (ii) view the speaker as an active agent involved in the construction of the local social organisation, identity and sociolinguistic meanings. Milroy (2004a), in particular, points out that influential studies of language variation and change and studies on language attitudes have generally developed independently from one another. She sees the need to devise a framework that integrates these two approaches, and thus builds accounts of language variation and change on the basis of language ideologies. It is through shared ideologies that social groups create norms

and values and establish themselves as meaningful and coherent social entities which differ from others. Ideology in different communities is intrinsically related to socio-cultural phenomena, such as language, which determine the uniqueness of a particular social group.

So far I have referred to language and language structures as conveying particular social meanings and ideologies. The idea that linguistic choices will be motivated by speakers' place in society and the social groups to which they belong or with which they wish to be identified follows from this. Members within a social group come together united by a common endeavour and, therefore, share a series of ideologies through which they make meaning, construct group cohesion and a collective identity and work to achieve their common enterprise. It can be expected, then, that different groups will foreground different ideologies. That is to say, what is meaningful for one group may not be meaningful at all for another.

What concerns us here is basically how people engage in specific social practices, which are indexical of different ideologies, to distinguish themselves from other groups. As Ochs (1992) argues, as social beings since we are born we start a process of socialisation which provides us with the skills to identify social meanings indexed in everyday practices. However, the main question that arises here is whether individuals project those social meanings and ideologies consciously or unconsciously.

In the last few years an increasing number of scholars within the areas of sociolinguistics and anthropology have agreed on the need to explore what people think about language (Silverstein 1992; Woolard 1992; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Despite the fact that most attempts that have been made so far reveal a lack of consensus on how to approach language ideology, these studies tend to have one point in common: they are based on the assumption that language and communication encode individual or collective ideologies. In general, ideological studies of language have regarded ideologies as the link between language and macro-social structures. This is largely reminiscent of Ochs' (1992) model (see section 2.1.3, above), as she claims that language structures are linked indirectly to social categories via a direct link to social meanings, stances or activities. Ideological studies of language, therefore, are not just concerned with language but also with society and the different individual and collective identities constructed in communities.

There are differing views on the notion of *language ideology*. Silverstein defines ideology as a 'set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use'. Heath, placing more emphasis on the social elements, regards it as 'self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group', and Irvine as 'the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests' (Silverstein 1979, Heath 1977 and Irvine 1989 cited in Woolard and Schieffelin 1994: 57). All these definitions seem to share the idea that language ideology is conceived as a series of 'beliefs' about how language is used as a medium for social expression. However, as Woolard and Schieffelin indicate, there is disagreement on whether or not people's views on language are relevant when accounting for the organisation of language. This is largely dependent on how this concept, and more specifically the notion of ideology at large, are approached. The controversy here arises primarily from the lack of consensus over where we situate ideology: on what level of consciousness it is located.

The views on this, according to Woolard (1992: 238), are polarised. Whereas for some ideology is 'a conscious public discourse' and individuals consciously modify and organise their language so that it indexes their ideologies, others do not regard ideology as conscious thought but, rather, as an aspect of 'lived relations' or, according to Eagleton, as:

a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in society (Eagleton 1991 in Woolard 1992: 238)

So whilst language ideology is the link that seems to connect language to particular social groups, the question lies in whether language users forge that link consciously or, by contrast, whether it is unconscious and therefore it has been shaped by 'expert observers', i.e. researchers. If we take language ideologies as unconscious and behavioural, then it must follow that we only know about them because researchers have drawn on their own (speaker) intuitions to read ideologies from language practices (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994).

At this point, I would question how reliably a researcher – often an outsider to the community – is able to identify language ideologies that help to delimit and define a particular community if we accept the view that individuals do not consciously project their ideologies through language. Moreover, people seem to be able to choose the social groups – communities of practice – to which they want to belong, and, in engaging with those groups (and by extension accepting their norms and values), they are acceding to participate in the social practices through which members project their identities. It must follow then that, firstly, they are able to identify what it is that distinguishes that particular group from others; and secondly, to some extent at least they have a choice to adopt or reject those values and/or practices that characterise the community (one of them being language). Furthermore, generally speakers are able to draw associations between some linguistic forms and particular social groups and/or social meanings. They have conceptions about language, can reflect on it and produce metalinguistic explanations about it. Studies in perceptual dialectology in particular have certainly demonstrated this to be the case; that speakers are conscious of at least some of the ideologies associated with language varieties and individual features (see Preston 2002). However, we also need to bear in mind that speakers have only limited access and control over their language. They are often unaware of many of the features that characterise their own, or other people's, language. Levels of accuracy and detail with which different speakers describe their own or others' language usage are variable (Preston 1996), which puts into question the extent to which they are able to choose to use or not use a particular language/dialect or language feature. Nevertheless, this may be dependant on how visible and meaningful these features are to the speakers. Following Eckert (2003), Milroy (2004b) suggests that two types of socially motivated language change may be identified: *off the shelf* and *under the counter* changes. *Off the shelf* changes are stylistic and social resources available to speakers regardless of the social networks with which they generally interact. By contrast, *under the counter* changes are available to individuals who are regularly exposed to, and interact with, a particular social group. They occur within local, close-knit networks. Milroy suggests that this type of change would only be available to those who have access to the appropriate local social networks and thus have access to the practices and ideologies whereby the group constructs meaning. Therefore, it may be possible to suggest that speakers tend to notice those locally available language features which are locally salient and essential in the semiotic process of identity

construction, and which they therefore perceive as distinctive markers of their communities. Often, people are even able to consciously use some of these features in attempts to emphasise or display their membership or affiliation to the local community. Agha (2003), Johnstone *et al.* (2006) and Silverstein (1998) propose the term *enregisterment/enregistration*⁴ to refer to this process whereby a linguistic feature or a set of linguistic features become salient and associated with a particular speech variety or register and ultimately are indexical of the speaker's connection to a particular set of cultural values. It generates a clear ideological link between language and place or social groupings.

Silverstein (1992) regards linguistic ideologies as 'metalinguistic discourse'; that is, he maintains that language is a conscious ideological phenomenon and therefore speakers are able to produce conscious explanations about language usage and the social significance of particular languages and/or dialects and/or linguistic features for particular social groups. Silverstein regards the link between the linguistic sign and its social meaning as the result of indexical semiotic processes whereby language is used denotatively (i.e. with a referential meaning) and/or interactionally (i.e. the social context in which an utterance will or can occur). The link between language and its context is subject to the speaker's awareness of the pragmatic functions of language. It is here that ideology comes into play as it constructs or distorts such metapragmatic function. It is the ideologies shared by the members of a social group that provide the guiding principles on how to contextualise language within that particular group. So ideology constructs the indexicality inherent in languages. Furthermore, in this process, according to Silverstein, ideology may re-organise and distort this metapragmatic function of language 'so as to create another potential order of effective indexicality that bears what we can appreciate sometimes as a truly ironic relation to the first'. He, therefore, identifies two different levels or orders of indexicality '*mediated by ideologically-informed metapragmatics*' [*Italics in original*] (1992: 315). However, although he refers to a *pre-ideological* and a *post-ideological* indexicality, he specifically indicates that the semiotic processes whereby the indexicality of different social signs is constituted cannot be absolutely pre-ideological. Any relationship between a linguistic form and a social category will be imbued with ideologies:

⁴ Note that Johnstone uses the term *enregisterment*. However, in this study I will use *enregistration* following Silverstein (1998) and Beal (Beal, Johnstone and Remlinger (2007)).

Any reasoning that interprets a presuppositional relationship – “Such-and-suches use for ‘...’, while so-and-sos...” – is potentially an ideological one rationalizing the indexical value of the forms in terms of schemata of social differentiation and classification that are independent of the usages at issue (Silverstein 1992: 316)

This is precisely the ideological model that Milroy (2000, 2004a) felt could be feasibly adapted in order to integrate language attitudes and ideologies in variationist studies as an essential tool to account for language variation and change. As we have just seen, Silverstein’s model provides us with a framework to interpret the indexicality inherent in language and therefore understand how language serves as a marker of identity. Milroy takes on his idea that language – and in fact almost any social sign – indexes social meanings and identity at two different levels. *First-order indexicality* refers to the links speakers establish between particular linguistic forms and some specific social category. Silverstein points out, though, that these social categories do not necessarily need to be those to which sociolinguists tend to resort to structure the social organisation of the speech communities they study, but any social category which may be indexed through language. This includes, therefore, the type of locally constructed categories that both second and third-wave studies (sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3) set out to identify in the study of language in its social context. An ideological analysis should provide a framework to identify not only speakers’ association of particular linguistic forms with particular social groups but also the social categories which are meaningful for the community.

Nevertheless, this first-order indexicality may be perceived and discussed differently by different communities. This is what Silverstein defines as *second-order indexicality*: how communities may rationalise and justify the link between the linguistic form and a particular social category. It is in these second-order indexical processes where we see how speakers evaluate linguistic indices, and ideologies emerge to construct and/or distort the metapragmatic function of linguistic forms. Since different communities will have different ideologies to interpret the link between language varieties or language forms and social groups, and will therefore have different justifications for their language behaviour, we can expect as a result that different social groups and meanings will be foregrounded in different communities. Consequently, the same language or language feature may be rationalised differently by different communities.

Traditional sociolinguistic studies have mostly looked into first-order indexicality, i.e. they have looked merely at correlations between social groups and linguistic variables. Yet, they have not provided very much insight into *why* those correlations might emerge: what determines people's language or what is the role of the cultural context or the speakers' identity in this. Silverstein argues that sociolinguists need to look beyond this and pay attention to second-order indexical processes and therefore use an ideological framework to be able to explain linguistic differentiation. In order to understand linguistic variation, we need to locate it within its relevant ideological context. Irvine and Gal (2000), who also support this model, refer to these ideological constructs that determine linguistic variation as the 'ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them' (Irvine and Gal 2000: 35). These ideologies enable speakers to identify linguistic differentiation and explain its social meaning, to associate particular language forms with particular social groups or social identities and to draw the boundaries of different social groups. This is precisely what Silverstein identifies as metalinguistic discourse.

These ideas – or ideological constructs – are in turn shaped by (i) the political, social and moral issues that permeate the sociolinguistic context under study, and (ii) the speaker's social position within the community. Thus different communities will have different ideologies and as a result different representations of language variation:

Participants' ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as part of, and evidence for, what they believe to be systematic behavioural, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups indexed (Irvine and Gal 2000:37).

However, the interpretation of a particular sociolinguistic landscape will also vary depending on whether linguistic variation is being explained with regard to the speakers' ideologies or to the observer's (researcher's) ideology. This is something to bear in mind since specific linguistic features may index different social categories depending on the ideology used to rationalise them.

In the implementation of this ideological model for the study of sociolinguistic processes, Irvine and Gal emphasise the need to explore not only the structure of ideological constructs but also their consequences, which they identify as: (a) 'How

participants' ideologies concerning boundaries and differences may contribute to language change'; (b) '[H]ow the describer's ideology has consequences for scholarship, how it shapes his or her description of language'; and (c) 'the consequences for politics, how linguistic ideologies are taken to authorize actions on the basis of linguistic relationship or difference' (2000: 36).

In the construction of the second-order indexicality of language, Irvine and Gal (2000) identify three main semiotic processes:

(a) *Iconisation*

Generally, when we think of particular social images or identities, we tend to identify some features that characterise those social images. The process of iconisation affects the link between the linguistic form and the social meaning it indexes in such a way that the linguistic form comes to be regarded as an icon or representation of the features, or of the inherent nature, of the group.

Thus:

[b]y picking out qualities supposedly shared by the social image and the linguistic image, the ideological representation – itself a sign – binds them together in a linkage that appears to be inherent (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38).

(b) *Fractal recursivity*

This is defined as 'the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level' (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38). This process entails taking the opposition between various groups or linguistic varieties and applying and adapting it to explain an opposition at a different level, for example 'creating subcategories on each side of a contrast or subcategories that include both sides but oppose them to something else' (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38). This process can be used to explain the fluid and shifting nature of social identities within communities to which the CofP model often alludes. Generally, different and/or opposed social groups within society tend to be regarded as fixed and impermeable. However, people move between different social groups. By affiliating to different social groups – CofPs – individuals reflect different identities, and as a consequence they engage in the social practices associated with those particular social groups. By means of this recursivity process, the opposition initially applied to different social groups is

projected to explain the fluid/shifting identities of a single person. Alternatively, the opposition between two opposed groups could be reproduced at the level of language.

(c) *Erasure*

This is a process of simplification whereby ideology ‘renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible’ (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38). The use of isoglosses in dialect maps exemplifies this process. In order to be able to draw linguistic boundaries and delimit different dialect areas or the distribution area of a particular feature, it is necessary to disregard – but not eradicate – unusual (or the least frequent) variants.

These three processes are involved in the creation of the ideological constructs whereby speakers rationalise linguistic variation. Moreover, exploring linguistic variation by employing an ideological approach should help to reveal how different groups define their identities and distinguish themselves from others.

In the last few years, a number of sociolinguistic studies have acknowledged the need to look beyond first-order indexicality and ascertain how linguistic ideologies may influence linguistic differentiation – i.e. second-order indexicality. Milroy (2000) was the first sociolinguist who resorted to the anthropological ideological framework that has been outlined in this section, and adapted it to variationist research. In this initial move to incorporate language ideology as an essential element in explaining language differentiation processes and the indexicality of language, Milroy produced evidence to argue that despite using the same language (English), Britain and the US have developed different language ideologies and, as a result, they hold different images of the standard and non-standard varieties. Due to differences in the ideological system between these two countries, different social groups are foregrounded in the rationalisation of linguistic varieties. Whereas linguistic varieties in Britain are generally regarded as an index of social class – non-standard varieties indexing the working class (WC) and StE the upper classes – in the US language varieties tend to index ethnicity. This is a consequence of different historical factors⁵ which have led to the association of non-standard varieties with different marginalized

⁵ See Milroy (2000) for a detailed account.

social groups: the WC in Britain and African Americans in the US. So whilst language varieties in both countries may be indexical of social class, ethnicity and geography, as a result of different second-order indexical processes, different language varieties become salient in each of these two cultural landscapes. Others, by contrast, recede or are erased. Thus, British language ideology foregrounds varieties indexing social class, whilst those indexing race and ethnicity remain in the background: they are erased. The opposite occurs in the US due to the dominant language ideologies. As a result, Milroy indicates that:

the most visceral reactions are typically reserved there [in Britain] for varieties indexing class, while in the United States such reactions are more likely to be elicited by varieties that primarily index race and ethnicity (Milroy 2000: 71).

With this analysis of language variation in Britain and the United States, Milroy justified and instigated the use of Silverstein's ideological framework to account for language variation and change in variationist studies. Subsequently, other sociolinguists have adopted this approach.

Dyer (Dyer 2002; Dyer and Wassink 2001), for example, in her study of language and identity in Corby, a former steel town in the English Midlands which up to the 1970s received a large influx of Scottish families, found that, as a result of dialect contact between the Scottish variety spoken by the immigrants and the original local Midland dialect, a shift of second-order indexical processes was in progress. Linguistic variants that had been brought to the local dialect by the Scottish migrants and therefore had been indices of ethnic identity – i.e. Scottishness – were no longer perceived as Scottish by the local younger generations. Instead, these features, which to an outsider may have sounded Scottish, had become indexes of the local identity as a result of a change in ideological constructs. In order to be able to reach this kind of conclusion and assert with some degree of certainty that there had been a change in the second-order indexicalities inherent in the local dialect, Dyer and Wassink (2001) acknowledged the importance of adopting a language ideology model which allows the members of the communities whose language we (sociolinguists) study to 'speak for themselves' (2001: 300).

Llamas' (2000) study of Middlesbrough English also revealed a shift in local language ideologies. Middlesbrough, formerly part of the North Riding of Yorkshire, became part of County Cleveland together with all the conurbations to the north and

south of the river Tees as a result of the reorganisation of county boundaries in 1974. This county was dissolved in 1996 and replaced by four local authorities, each of which was an independent county. Since then Middlesbrough itself has been an independent Borough. Culturally, yet not politically, the whole Teesside conurbation has become associated with the North-east of England over time.

According to Llamas, all these changes have had a noticeable effect on the local identity of Middlesbrough, which has also had repercussions in the local dialect. In her apparent-time study, Llamas (2001) found evidence to suggest that the local dialect has been converging towards the North-eastern varieties. Looking at the speech of different generations, she found an increase of typically North-eastern – more particularly Tyneside – variants such as intervocalic [ʔt] amongst the youngest age group. Alongside the linguistic data, she also collected local instantiations of second-order indexicalities in the form of opinions and attitudes expressed by her informants towards their language and region. These suggested that an ideological change had taken place in the last few decades, which had led to ‘the realignment of orientations across age groups’ (Llamas 2000: 143). Whereas the older age groups showed a clear tendency to identify with Yorkshire, the younger generations seemed to regard themselves as North-eastern despite their obvious hostility towards Newcastle, the dominant city in the North-east of England.

Llamas argues that this apparent contradiction amongst the younger speakers – i.e. linguistic convergence towards TE but hostility towards Newcastle and the Geordie accent and refusal to regard Middlesbrough as dependent on, or related in any way to, Newcastle – could suggest that ‘young speakers see themselves as ‘North Eastern’, but as from Middlesbrough’ (Llamas 2000: 143). Therefore, the attested increase in the use of localised variants could be indicative of a change in the indexicalities of language: Middlesbrough speakers would not be using these features in order to index identification with Newcastle but rather as indices of their Middlesbrough identity.

This section has introduced the ideological framework adapted by some sociolinguists in the last few years which integrates ideological constructs as essential factors in accounting for language differentiation in variationist research. The incorporation of this ideological approach in survey studies of the type conducted by Llamas (2001) and Dyer and Wassink (2001) brings this kind of study more in line with the second and third-wave sociolinguistic studies described in section 2.1, above,

as this approach aims to disclose those social categories which are salient in different communities and the ideologies which may lead to linguistic differentiation and/or change. In other words, it acknowledges that the indexical (i.e. ideological) link between language and social groups is not only indirect as Ochs (1992) suggests, but it may vary from one community to another. Thus, this framework recognises the need for a ‘bottom-up’ approach to linguistic variation that enables the examination of linguistic features in their local ideological context. The next section turns to the Sunderland study itself and discusses how and why this ideological framework was adopted. In describing the approach and techniques employed to conduct this study of variation, this section aims to position the study with respect to the three variationist waves reviewed earlier in this chapter.

2.3 THE SUNDERLAND STUDY

From its initial stages, the Sunderland study was conceived as a typically first-wave variation study, but with some elements from second-wave variationist research.⁶ It aimed primarily to produce a description of the main features that distinguish the Sunderland dialect from the neighbouring dialect of Newcastle, and to look at how the local identity potentially influenced the way in which Sunderland people speak. The Survey of Regional English (SuRE) methodology, reviewed in chapter 3, was accordingly adapted so that it elicited all the data required: not only lexical and phonological data but also grammatical and attitudinal. As expected, the attitudinal data confirmed from the start that the issue of ‘being different’ – more specifically being different *from* Newcastle – and constructing a distinct Sunderland identity and expressing their sense of belonging to the community were issues that to some extent concerned most of my informants. Generally, Sunderland has remained in the shadow of Newcastle, with which it tends to be associated. This is a matter of concern, and often a source of annoyance, for Sunderland people, who would like Sunderland to be acknowledged as a city with its own character, voice and identity distinct from Newcastle. As a result, Wearsiders have developed a strong local identity which is often linked to the rivalry that they have with their ‘Geordie’ neighbours.

⁶ See *first wave of variation studies* in section 2.1.1, and *second wave* in 2.1.2.

In this context, the local dialect seemed to emerge as a distinctive marker of the Sunderland community. Its speakers – regardless of how strong their affiliation to the local community was – held that, despite their proximity to Newcastle, there are indeed noticeable differences between Sunderland and Newcastle English. As chapter 4 will show, attitudinal data revealed that there is a strong connection between the local dialect and the local identity. Sunde is one of the main symbols employed to define the limits of the Sunderland community and through which Sunderland people appear to construct meaning.

Although the identity questionnaire, which is introduced in section 3.2.2.2, was designed especially so that it elicited information about the local identity and local attitudes towards the region and towards local and regional dialects, it could be argued that its questions were rather leading, since to some degree it was devised drawing mostly on the rivalry between Newcastle and Sunderland. It could be argued that it did not allow for any other alternative ways of identifying with the Sunderland community than through the rivalry. Nonetheless, during the interviews most of my informants were given the opportunity to speak at some length about the issues raised in the questionnaire and it became evident that the joint construction of meaning in Sunderland was not just a question of being or not being a ‘Mackem’. Moreover, rejecting the ‘Mackem’ label did not imply that they did not regard themselves as members of the community, they did not want to draw a boundary between Sunderland and Newcastle, or that they avoided the local dialect. As we will see in chapter 4, below, expressing ‘Sunderlandness’ is more complex than this: it involves more than just being or not being a ‘Mackem’ or feeling or not feeling a hostility towards Newcastle.

Bearing this in mind, I realised that if I proceeded as planned and therefore conducted an analysis of the Sunderland corpus within a typically Labovian quantitative framework, and then explored the local identity in an annexed section, the outcome would be an account of the Sunderland speech community in which language variation and local attitudes would be examined separately. Language variables would be examined as direct markers of a series of predetermined or socio-demographic categories such as age and gender, which may not be the only salient categories in the local construction of meaning. Furthermore, local attitudes towards the local and regional varieties would be dealt with independently from the linguistic analysis. Given the evident relation between language and identity and the importance

of the local dialect as a symbol of identity, the approach to the whole study was revisited so that identity and attitudinal issues occupied a more focal place in this account of language variation in Sunderland.

If this study was to shed some light on the local dialect, it was necessary to first provide some insight into the Sunderland community and its internal dynamics: e.g. how it defines its boundaries and how meaning is constructed. This involved looking at the community at large and trying to identify any locally salient social categories, ideologies and symbols. Individuals would be regarded as social agents actively engaged in the organisation of the community and the construction of meaning – not as socially passive as first wave studies would regard them. Having made sense of the local culture, I would be in a position to analyse linguistic variation bearing in mind that the use of specific variants may need to be interpreted as a sign of affiliation to particular locally constructed categories or as indexical of local social meanings, rather than merely as markers of pre-determined socio-demographic categories typically used in sociolinguistic research. This new approach relocated the Sunderland study more under the scope of second-wave studies, rather than primarily within first wave studies. We need to remember, nevertheless, that the differences between the two approaches are not clear-cut.

Furthermore, having noticed that my informants strongly believed that their local dialect was different from that of their Geordie neighbours and that they seemed to be rather sure as to what the actual differences were, I thought it would be interesting to consider to what extent speakers' perceptions would be supported by the linguistic data collected in the city. Since the range of phonological, grammatical and lexical features that could be analysed was fairly wide, there were three possible choices: Either (i) select some features randomly, (ii) select variables that had already been studied in other North-eastern dialect studies so that the findings of my study could be compared with trends found in the region or (iii) establish some criteria for selection which, as well as reducing the features that will be analysed to a sensible number, helped to unify the whole study. Following my interest in speakers' perceptions and in the local language ideologies, I decided to analyse linguistic features that in some way seemed to be locally salient. Being an outsider to the community, the only way of doing this 'meaningful' selection would be to rely upon the speakers' linguistic perceptions and analyse those features that Sunderland people seemed to regard as stereotypes of the local dialect. Consequently, I eventually resolved to establish my

informants' perceptions of what they felt are the main differences between Sunderland English (henceforth SundE) and TE as a criterion by which to select the features of the Sunderland dialect that would be analysed (see chapter 5). My analysis thus attempts to ascertain whether some of these perceived differences have a real foundation or, on the contrary, are merely popular stereotypes that do not seem to be supported by the data collected. Focusing on the Sunderland dialect from the point of view of its speakers, my data analysis aims to find enough linguistic evidence in their own speech to corroborate or disregard their linguistic perceptions. This also provides a chance to argue for or against the validity of speakers' perception of their own language.

In the analysis of the linguistic data, language is examined in correlation with some of the pre-determined social categories typically used in traditional variationist research –namely age and gender. However, given that this study also aims to ascertain the internal dynamics of this North-eastern community, language is also, where necessary, correlated with any other more meaningful factors or locally constructed social categories which may be disclosed in the analysis of the qualitative attitudinal data collected through the IdQ and in the actual interviews. This approach to the data will provide some insight into the social distribution of the linguistic features under analysis and explore how they function as actual markers of the Sunderland dialect and as a tool for demonstrating affiliation to the local community.

The emphasis placed on studying the Sunderland dialect within a meaningful social context, and on using the local identity and ideologies to account for local variation required the adoption of the language ideology model outlined in section 2.2 for the interpretation of the linguistic data. A qualitative analysis of the speakers' own perceptions and rationalisations of their community, language and identity not only enables the identification of any locally meaningful social categories, but also provides some insight into the second-order indexicalities inherent in the local dialect.

All in all, this reorientation of the whole study, which acknowledges the importance of studying language variants in relation to salient local social categories and social meanings, and foregrounds identity and local language ideologies as essential to explain the indexicality of language, favours the production of a contextually relevant account of language differentiation in Sunderland.

In the course of this chapter, I have provided a general outlook of some of the approaches that have been employed to explain sociolinguistic variation over the past

50 years. This was done with a view to enabling the definition of the theoretical background used in the study reported in this thesis and the 'bottom-up' approach to language variation adopted in it. Finally, I have provided some insight into how the study has developed since its start. Having done this, the following chapter turns to introduce the methodology employed to gather the linguistic and attitudinal data necessary to conduct this study of Sunderland and defines the population sample.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The methodology used in this study is based upon that designed by Llamas for the *Survey of Regional English* (SuRE),¹ and which she piloted in her study of the language and identity of Middlesbrough (2001). This methodology was chosen for the Sunderland study because it enabled the explanation of language variation in the light of local ideologies of language and place.² This chapter is divided into four sections: section 3.1 introduces SuRE; section 3.2 presents an in-depth discussion of the data-collection method used in this study; 3.3 describes the population sample; and 3.4 discusses the fieldwork process.

What will be seen (in section 3.1) is that the last comprehensive record of English dialects dates back to the 1950s and 1960s, when the *Survey of English Dialects* was conducted, and that SuRE is a response to concerns of many contemporary sociolinguists that there is need for a more current database of dialects as they are spoken at the turn of the 21st century. Llamas' methodology was preserved almost intact for the Sunderland study, though there were several changes (mostly aesthetic) made to enhance clarity for the informants and maximise the efficiency of data elicitation. Also, following Llamas' suggestions, extra questionnaires were added in order to expand the methodology and to make it more fit for the purpose of this study (section 3.2). In order to conduct an apparent time study, such as this, parameters for informant selection needed to be established (section 3.3) and the interview strategy was formalised (section 3.4).

3.1 THE SURVEY OF REGIONAL ENGLISH: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Background

The Survey of English Dialects (SED) (Orton and Dieth 1962-1971) was the last major dialect survey which collected evidence of variation in English dialects on a

¹ cf. Llamas (1999), Upton and Llamas (1999) and Kerswill *et al.* (1999).

² The value in studying language variation by employing a language ideological approach is discussed at length in section 2.2.

nationwide scale. It was carried out in the 1950s and 60s and its aim was to leave documentary evidence of the form of the most traditional dialects in England at the time. Although some other regional surveys were carried out after the SED: e.g. the Survey of Anglo-Welsh Dialects (Parry 1977, 1979), the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Mather *et al.* 1975) and the Tape-Recorded Survey of Hiberno-English Speech (Barry 1981), it is the Survey of English Dialects (SED) data that has served as the main reference point for many dialect studies in England.

The SED was conducted with the aim of recording English dialects before the effects of mobility caused them to disappear. Half a century has elapsed since then and society has undergone noticeable changes. The increase of social and geographical mobility and improvement of transport means and communication media have contributed to a rapid mix and change of people and, therefore, of their respective dialects in the cities, where most of the employment opportunities lie today. Also, there has been an increase in the number of people who go on to university education. All these changes and many more have made it easier for speakers of dialectal varieties to mix, move and change. Thus, at the turn of the 20th century, dialectologists then at the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and Reading felt that it was becoming increasingly necessary to update our dialect databases and carry out a nation-wide survey that recorded current dialect variation. This would provide documentary evidence for future scholars of British English dialects such as they are at the beginning of the 21st century. The SuRE project, therefore, emerged as an attempt to bridge the gap existing in modern dialect studies at the end of the 20th century, making use of the new technologies developed since the times of the SED: e.g. computers, recording devices, the internet.

3.1.2 SuRE: A new dialect corpus to bridge gaps

The main concerns of those who conceived the SuRE project were basically two fold. Firstly, although in the last decades a considerable number of studies have been conducted into linguistic variation, it is difficult to compare the results of studies that have different aims and have employed different methodologies. Secondly, the amount of research into current regional and social lexical variation in the British Isles is very scarce (most studies have focused primarily on accent and grammar). Nonetheless, whilst the few studies that have looked into lexis use similar methods

(usually lexical questionnaires), their results are not comparable because they have focused upon different lexical variables. Therefore, the aim of SuRE was:

to create a computer-held database of consistently-collected material from a planned network of British localities which will record and document the facts of linguistic variation throughout Britain, permitting detailed analyses of issues concerning the diffusion of language change and the spread of current vernacular changes in British English (Llamas 1999: 96).

This involves collecting a wide range of data across the British Isles. Such data need to be collected bearing in mind that the aim is to study regional variation on three levels: phonological, grammatical and lexical. This being so, the data should be capable of being subjected to analysis on these three levels. Moreover, it should also be comparable across the geographical areas surveyed. All these requirements made it necessary to design a new methodology whose aims were ‘to obtain informal speech from the informant (from which multi-levelled analyses of both regionally and socially comparable data are possible), and to elicit the data as quickly and easily as is possible’ (Llamas 1999: 97-98).

The reason why the data should be elicited as quickly and easily as possible is that, in contrast with traditional dialect studies like the SED, modern social dialectology seeks to study variation not only from one region to another but also between genders, age-groups, social classes, different speech styles etc. Modern dialect studies no longer focus on that section of the speaking community that uses the most traditional dialect varieties as traditional dialectology did. The SED, for example, recruited traditional dialect speakers who:

[v]ery rarely were [...] below the age of sixty. They were mostly men: in this country men speak vernacular more frequently, more consistently, and more genuinely than women. Bilingual speakers could not be shunned: as a result of our education system, the inhabitants of the English country-side can readily adjust their natural speech to the social situation in which they may find themselves. But dialect-speakers whose residence in the locality had been interrupted by significant absences were constantly regarded with suspicion. Informants with any speech handicaps were always avoided. In no case was an informant paid for his services (Orton and Dieth 1962-1971: 15-16).

Later, Chambers and Trudgill (1980: 33) coined the term NORM, an acronym which stands for *non-mobile older rural males*, to characterise the type of informant that was used by traditional dialect studies. The concern of modern dialect studies, by contrast, lies in looking into correlations between linguistic and social variables. This entails

recruiting a larger number of informants so that all the social variables that are going to be analysed are sufficiently represented in the population sample. Due to this and to the fact that researchers are generally limited by time and economic resources, the new SuRE methodology had to be capable of being administered easily and quickly to a large number of informants.

As Llamas remarks, though, the problem lies in the difficulty of recording data that is comparable on three linguistic levels of variation and at the same time constitutes natural informal speech. The fact that data must be subjected to multi-levelled analyses discards the possibility of trying to obtain 'free' conversation from the interviewees. This would provide the fieldworker with a large amount of speech, and consequently a considerable amount of analysable data. Yet, the data elicited by informants would very much depend on their improvised speech production, and as such would not be comparable. Therefore, the SuRE fieldworker needs to be able to control the informants' language production so that the kind of data required is elicited. Moreover, s/he will need to minimise the formality of the interview situation and overcome the problem of the 'observer's paradox' (Labov 1972b) and help the informants to forget to some extent that their language is being observed so that they shift as little as possible from informal speech styles.

A questionnaire, the method successfully used in traditional dialectal studies like the SED or the English Dialect Dictionary (EDD) (Wright 1896-1905), would enable the SuRE fieldworker to control the data elicited by informants. By means of a questionnaire, the data elicited are reduced to the amount and type that the researcher needs. The drawback of this method, nevertheless, is that it is probably more appropriate to collect lexical and grammatical data but not 'for a survey whose intention is to access and collect samples of informal speech large enough to undertake phonological analyses which permit quantifications' (Llamas 1999: 97). Also, the questionnaire is generally perceived as a very formal data-collection method that informants usually associate with tests.

Bearing all this in mind, Llamas designed a methodology that combined these two methodological tools, despite their respective pros and cons. However, both the questionnaire design and the administration technique devised for the SuRE methodology differ from traditional ones so that the data elicited meet all requisites outlined above.

The following section reviews the SuRE methodology, from the various parts of the questionnaire to the administration technique.

3.2 THE SuRE METHODOLOGY

As we will see in the course of this section, Llamas' SuRE methodology is innovatory not only because of the distinctive layout of its questionnaire, which differs drastically from that of the traditional dialect questionnaires, but also because, as a result of the way in which the questionnaire is administered and the interview conducted, the power imbalance between the discourse roles of the interviewer and interviewee is minimised. In the data collection, the questionnaire is taken as a schema around which the fieldworker leads the interview. Thus, the administration of the methodology is divided into two stages: (i) completion of the questionnaire, and (ii) the interview. The SuRE method is also characterised by its high flexibility as it is possible to adapt this method to the needs of different dialect studies.

The present study of the Sunderland dialect focuses exclusively upon accent features and the local social identity and local perceptions of the local dialect. However, since it is envisaged that grammatical and lexical aspects of this variety will be examined in future research, the core SuRE pack was expanded so that it included not only an identity questionnaire and an identification index score but also a grammar questionnaire.

The next few sections turn to explore in turn all these aspects of the SuRE method.

3.2.1 The SuRE questionnaire

The questionnaire is the main tool of the SuRE method. Its layout differs radically from traditional questionnaires like the SED's (see figure 3.1) and it was designed so that the same questionnaire could be employed in any region around the British Isles. This would allow the data recorded in different localities to be comparable both socially and regionally.

NATURE

BOOK IV

1

WATER, GROUND

- 1 . . . any running water smaller than a river? Rivulet.
- 2 . . . the thing built across a river to help you to get from one side to the other? Bridge*.
- 3 Sometimes there is no bridge. What do you call that shallow place where you can walk across? Ford*.
- 4 After very heavy rains a river becomes swollen, and so you say the river is in flood.
- 5 . . . that place on a farm filled with water, smaller than a lake? Pond.
- 5a If the pond is not deep, it must be . . . shallow.—(Added August 1953)
- 6 . . . those small hollows in the road, filled with water after rain? Puddles.
- 7 . . . that low-lying flat land in the bend of a river, generally very fertile? Low-lying land.
- 8 When a patch of land is water-logged, you say it is . . . boggy.
- 9 To get water away from land that is wet and boggy, you must . . . drain* it.
- 10 If the land is not level, what do you call a part that goes up gently? Slope.
- 11 If the road up a slope is not like this [i. gentle rise], but like this [i. steep rise], you say it is . . . steep.

Figure 3.1: Extract from the SED (Orton and Dieth 1962-1971: *Introduction*)

Llamas' original core methodology pack included an instructions sheet, a biographical information sheet and three Sense Relation Network sheets. All of them are introduced in this section. However, whilst Llamas' questionnaire had already proved to be useful for the elicitation of comparable linguistic (and attitudinal) data in her study of Middlesbrough (see Llamas 2001), at the start of the Sunderland project, in 2001, Esther Asprey and Kate Wallace (University of Leeds) and myself implemented some changes in the content and layout of the original questionnaire. These changes, which were largely aesthetic ones, did not in any way alter the administration technique of the questionnaire or its underlying rationale, though. The aims of this revision were merely both to promote clarity and make the SuRE pack attractive and well presented. Any fields which were deemed to be unproductive or superfluous were removed too and we ensured that the methodology conformed to the current legal requirements by adding a consent and confidentiality form. Thus, the refined

SuRE questionnaire consisted of four sections rather than three as shown in table 3.1 (Asprey *et al.* 2006).³

The following sections introduce the various forms of the SuRE questionnaire in its revised form, given that this was the one implemented in Sunderland.⁴

Llamas' SURE pack	Revised SuRE pack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions sheet • Biographical Information • 3 SRNs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Feelings, actions and states ii. The outside world iii. People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions sheet • <i>About You</i> sheet • Consent and confidentiality form • 3 SRNs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Being, saying and doing ii. Everyday life iii. People

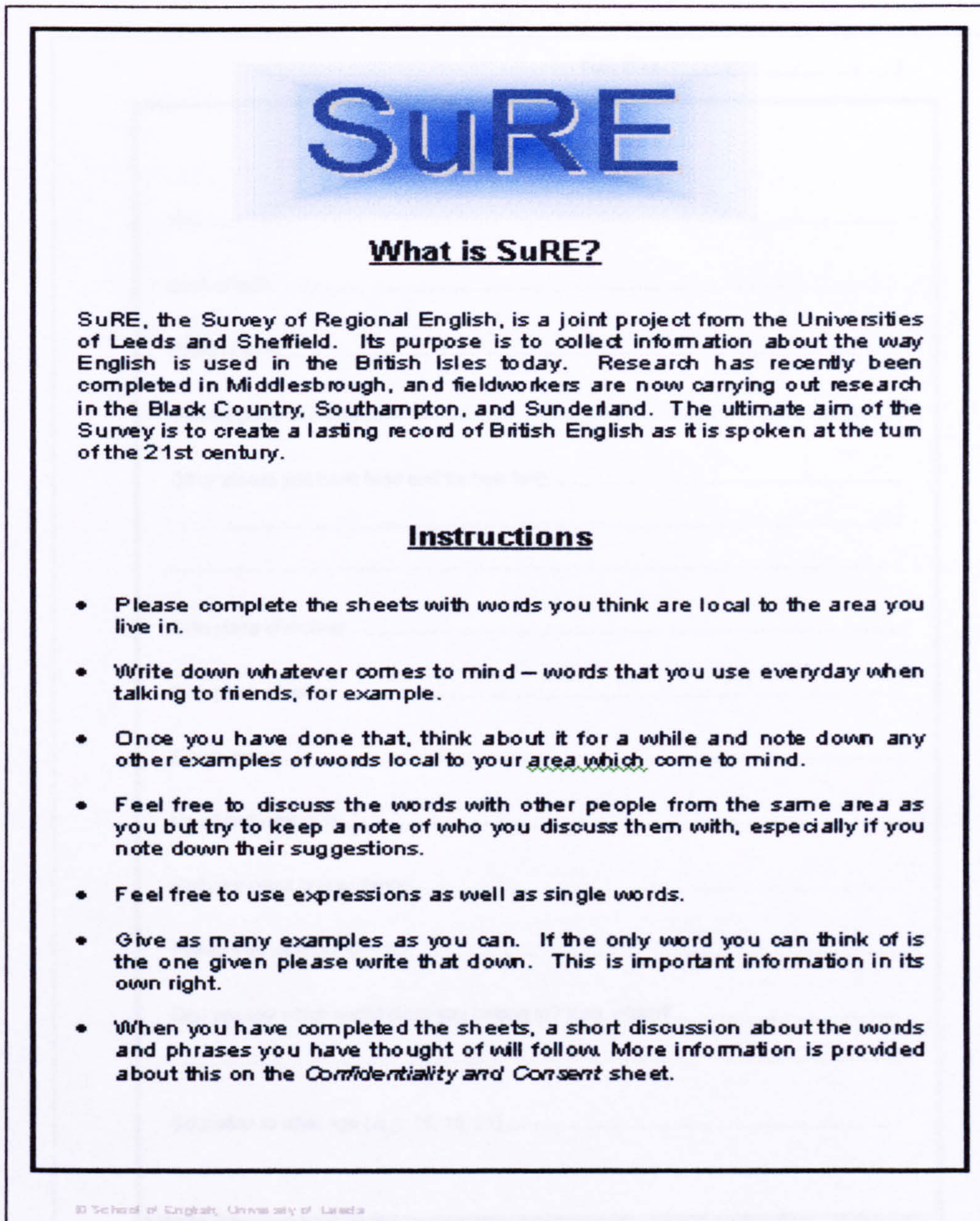
Table 3.1: Sections of Llamas' and of the new revised questionnaire compared

3.2.1.1 INSTRUCTIONS SHEET

Figure 3.2 is a reproduction of the instructions cover-sheet for the revised SuRE pack. As a development of Llamas' original questionnaire (see appendix 1), a logo is added in order to reinforce, in the minds of the informants, the academic credentials of SuRE and to emphasise its status as a significant project. Additionally, a paragraph is added to provide participants with a brief introduction to SuRE, and to perhaps enable them to understand how their contribution will further knowledge of regional variation at the turn of the 21st century. Finally, Llamas' instructions for completion of the questionnaire are presented with slight amendments for clarification, and also to

³ When this revision started, Asprey, Wallace and I had just started our PhDs and were intending to study the dialects of the Black Countries, Southampton and Sunderland respectively. Since at the time no funds were available to set the SuRE project in motion, Prof. C. Upton (University of Leeds) and Prof. J. Beal (University of Sheffield) agreed that we could collaborate to refine the SuRE pack and devise a standard form of the core SuRE pack which we would employ in our respective doctoral projects and which could be made available, on formal request, to any future researchers intending to study other varieties. The idea, then, was that each individual researcher would be able to contribute to the construction of the new SuRE database and thus this database would hold socially and regionally comparable linguistic data. However, although to date the SuRE methodology has been implemented, either in its original or refined form, in a number of areas other than the Black Country, Southampton and Sunderland (e.g. Berwick-upon-Tweed (Pichler, forthcoming), Sheffield (Finnegan, forthcoming), it must be noted that the SuRE database has not been created so far.

remove the possibility of ambiguity between a linguist's and a layman's understanding of technical vocabulary (for example, dialect). This last amendment will hopefully avoid the exclusion of many relevant examples of lexical variation (such as slang or colloquialisms) that otherwise might have been lost due to participants misunderstanding what SuRE endeavours to collect.



The image shows a document titled 'SuRE' in large blue letters. Below the title is the section 'What is SuRE?' followed by a paragraph explaining the project's purpose and current research locations. The next section is 'Instructions', which contains a bulleted list of seven points for participants to follow. At the bottom left, there is a small copyright notice for the School of English, University of Leeds.

SuRE

What is SuRE?

SuRE, the Survey of Regional English, is a joint project from the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield. Its purpose is to collect information about the way English is used in the British Isles today. Research has recently been completed in Middlesbrough, and fieldworkers are now carrying out research in the Black Country, Southampton, and Sunderland. The ultimate aim of the Survey is to create a lasting record of British English as it is spoken at the turn of the 21st century.

Instructions

- Please complete the sheets with words you think are local to the area you live in.
- Write down whatever comes to mind – words that you use everyday when talking to friends, for example.
- Once you have done that, think about it for a while and note down any other examples of words local to your area which come to mind.
- Feel free to discuss the words with other people from the same area as you but try to keep a note of who you discuss them with, especially if you note down their suggestions.
- Feel free to use expressions as well as single words.
- Give as many examples as you can. If the only word you can think of is the one given please write that down. This is important information in its own right.
- When you have completed the sheets, a short discussion about the words and phrases you have thought of will follow. More information is provided about this on the *Confidentiality and Consent* sheet.

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Figure 3.2: Revised SuRE Instructions sheet

⁴ For a detailed comparison of Llamas' original SuRE pack and the revised one produced by Asprey, Burbano and Wallace for their respective studies see Asprey *et al.* (2006).

3.2.1.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEET: *ABOUT YOU*

The *Biographical Information* form was re-titled *About You* (figure 3.3). Changes were made in order to make the SuRE methodology as informal as possible, and to remove the possibility of causing embarrassment to the informants: for example, references to unemployment and lack of education. These are the main changes:

Form ID No. (_____)

About You

Sex.....

Date of birth.....

Place of birth.....

Current place of residence.....

Other places you have lived and for how long.....
.....
.....

Birth place of mother.....

Birth place of father.....

Ethnic group.....

Usual occupation(s).....

Mother's usual occupation(s).....

Father's usual occupation(s).....

Can you say which social class you belong to? If so, which?.....
.....

Education to what age (e.g. 16, 18, 21)
.....

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Figure 3.3: Revised SuRE Biographical Information sheet: *About You*

1. Informants are no longer asked to give their name. This field was considered redundant given that the informants were already asked to give their name in the *Consent and confidentiality* form (cf. section 3.2.1.3, below).
2. Although the informants' housing may be an essential piece of information in ascertaining their social status, this field was removed in case it was considered intrusive or embarrassing. Besides, it 'had caused some informants in pilot work carried out in the Black Country to give false reports of their status in terms of house ownership' (Asprey *et al.* 2006).
3. In addition to the above, through re-wording the prompt, informants are given the option to supply or withhold information regarding their social class. Even though this information could be vital to the fieldworker, it was hoped that, if it was denied, there was still a chance of obtaining it in the interview.
4. Finally, in the revised form, informants are prompted to quantify their education by age rather than implying they should measure it by qualification (e.g. O-levels, A-levels, University)'. Through this simple re-phrasing, it is left to the informant to decide on the amount of information they feel comfortable in providing.

3.2.1.3 CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT FORM

The *Consent and Confidentiality* form is the most vital addition to the methodology (figure 3.4). Passed in the UK in 1998, the *Data Protection Act* deals with the legal issues associated with the gathering and storing of electronic information.⁵ The impact of this act on sociolinguistic surveys relates to the researchers' 'accountability to informants about the safety of the data they supply, a need to store such information securely, and to make available such data on request' (Asprey *et al.* 2006: 442). The *Data Protection Act* did not exist when the SED was carried out; as a result, no informed consent was sought from the interviewees, which means that their agreement to be interviewed was perhaps the only consent given. Consequently, as the

⁵ Information Commissioner (2002), available at: <http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk>

Johnstone argues that it is ethical: (i) to grant anonymity to the people who are going to co-operate in any kind of research; (ii) to let them know how the data obtained from them will be used in the future; and (iii) to give them the option of deciding whether they want to take part in the research (2000:39-57). By asking for formal consent, the SuRE avoids any possible ethical and/or legal problems that could arise at a later stage. The SuRE *Confidentiality and Consent* form starts by briefly explaining: (i) what the aims of the survey are; and (ii) how the data recorded will be used in the future (i.e. as part of a database which will be used as a reference source for the worldwide research community, as well as in different types of publications). It goes on to grant anonymity to the informants, establishing the University of Leeds as the institution responsible for making sure that this is fulfilled in accordance with the *Data Protection Act*. A contact address is provided in case any informant would like to request an electronic copy of the information they give.

3.2.1.4 SENSE RELATION NETWORKS

The Sense Relation Networks (SRNs) are the core of the SuRE methodology. They are based on Aitchison's view (1994: 82-98) that words are interconnected in the mind, forming a 'word-web'. This conceptual web is a lexical matrix in which words are interrelated to one another by means of links, e.g. co-ordination, collocation, superordination and synonymy. All of these links, some stronger than others, help to interconnect words so that they are organised in semantic fields, which in turn are also interconnected. The SuRE questionnaire asks informants to work their way through the different notion words, presented in the form of an SRN, and write down their own dialect and informal variants in the space allocated. Figure 3.5 shows an SRN which was completed by one of Llamas' Middlesbrough informants in the pilot of the questionnaire.

The reason for using the SRNs is that notions are grouped together by subject matter (i) to favour the production of spontaneous responses (Johnston 1985:85), (ii) to avoid any possible ambiguity and (iii) to define and delimit the meaning of each word within each network. As Llamas remarks:

The SRNs then, as well as being a visual network, rather than a list of questions, represent the interrelated network of paradigmatic and syntagmatic sense relations in which linguistic expressions from similar semantic fields define and delimit each others' meaning.

Moreover:

They also represent the sense relation of a partial synonymy, which the dialect variant holds with the standard notion word. Additionally, in time they will represent a geographical sense relation network of dialectal variation of partial synonyms found throughout the British Isles (Llamas 1999: 102).

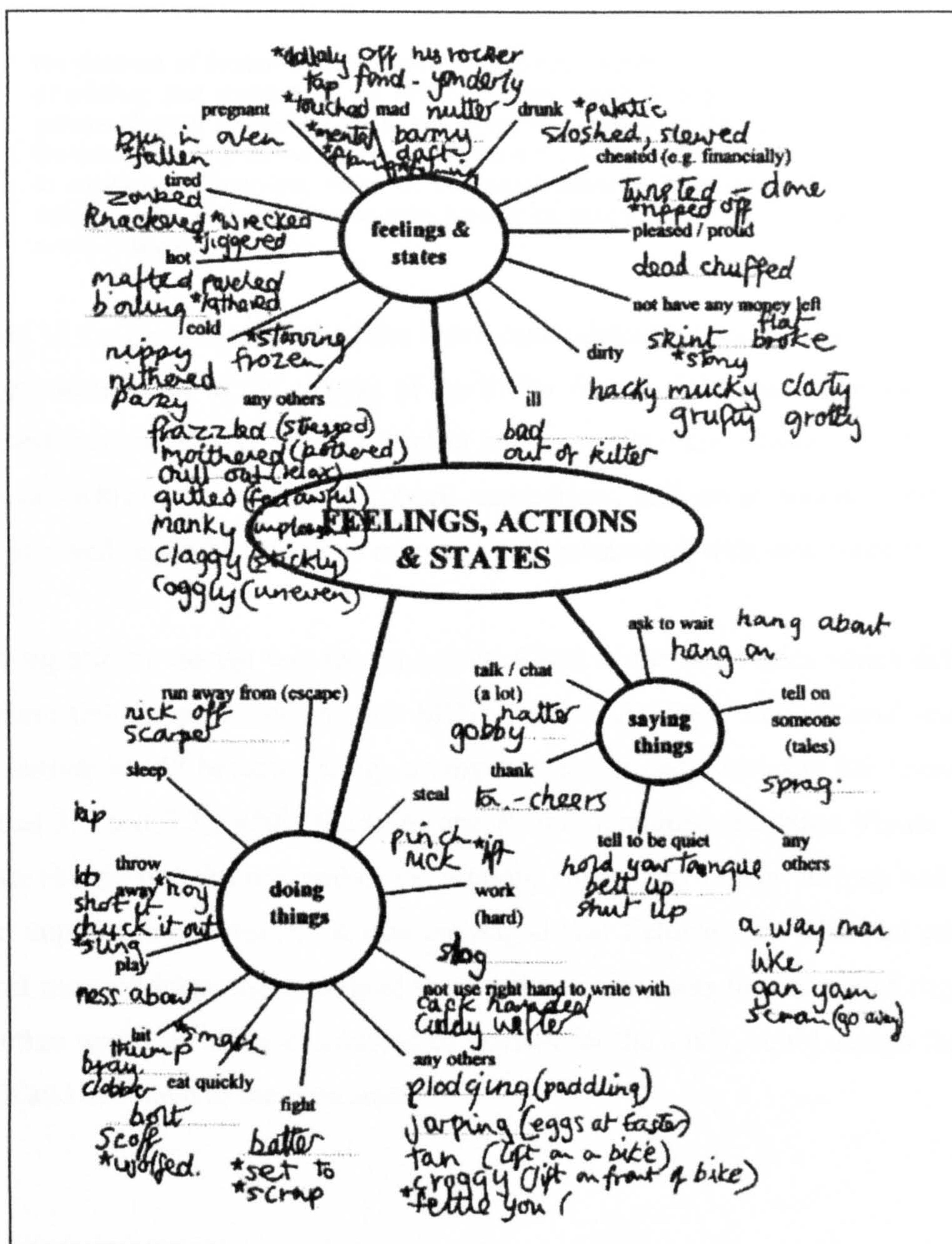


Figure 3.5: SRN completed by one of Llamas' Middlesbrough informants in her pilot study (Llamas 1999:114)

Following Aitchison's conceptualisation of word-webs, Llamas designed three SRNs around three different semantic fields:

- (a) *Feelings, actions and states* (Appendix 1)
- (b) *People* (Appendix 1)
- (c) *The outside world* (Appendix 1)

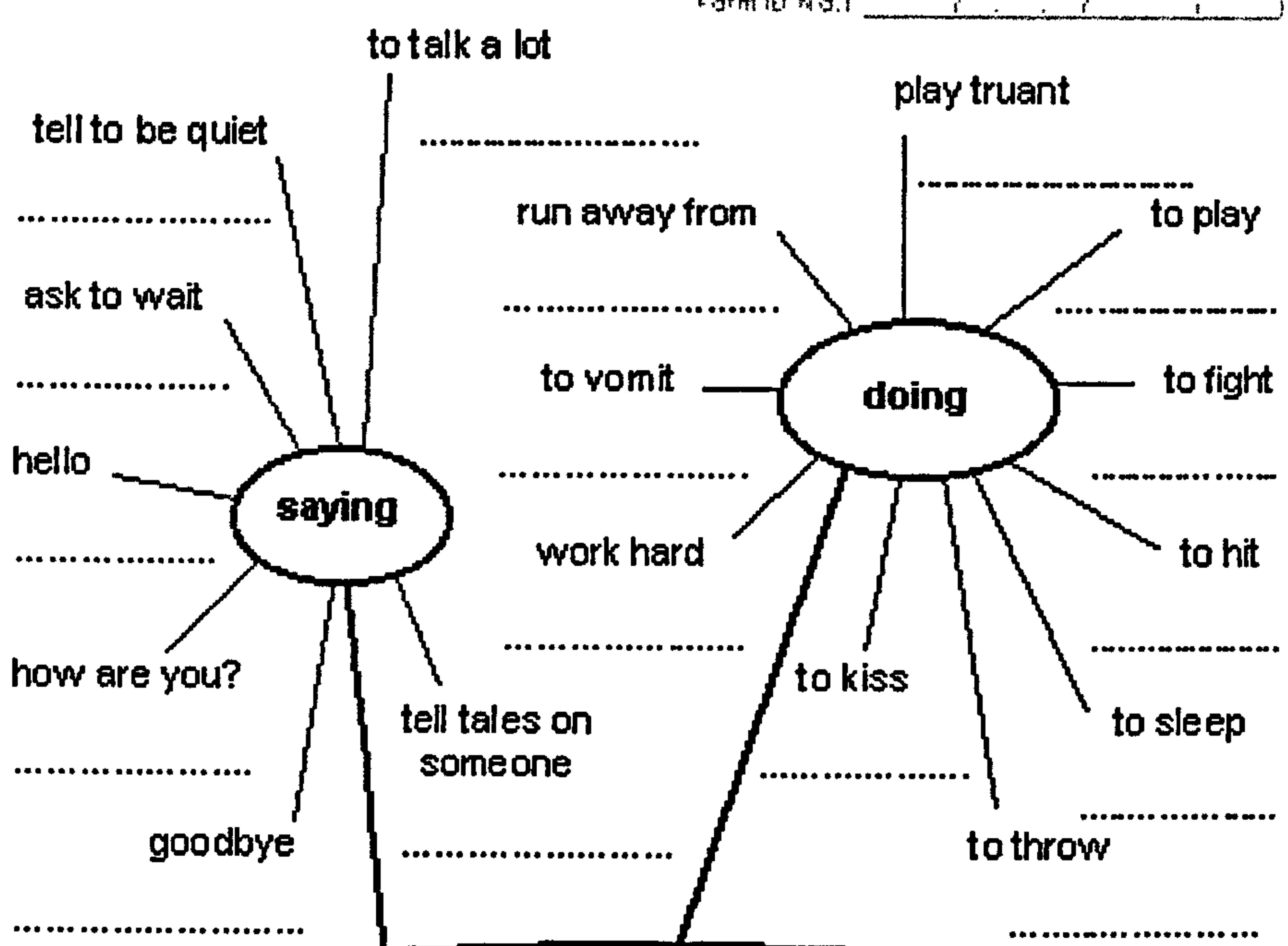
These three topics were not chosen arbitrarily since:

the selection of semantic fields and standard notion words on the 3 SRNs is the result of trialling and revision of the method during which 8 original SRNs have been subsumed under the present 3. The subsumption was made in the interests of reducing the time needed by the informants to complete the SRNs, as well as the time necessary to conduct the interview. None of the initial semantic fields have been discarded entirely, but the fields have become broader to encompass a greater area of notion words (Llamas 1999: 102).

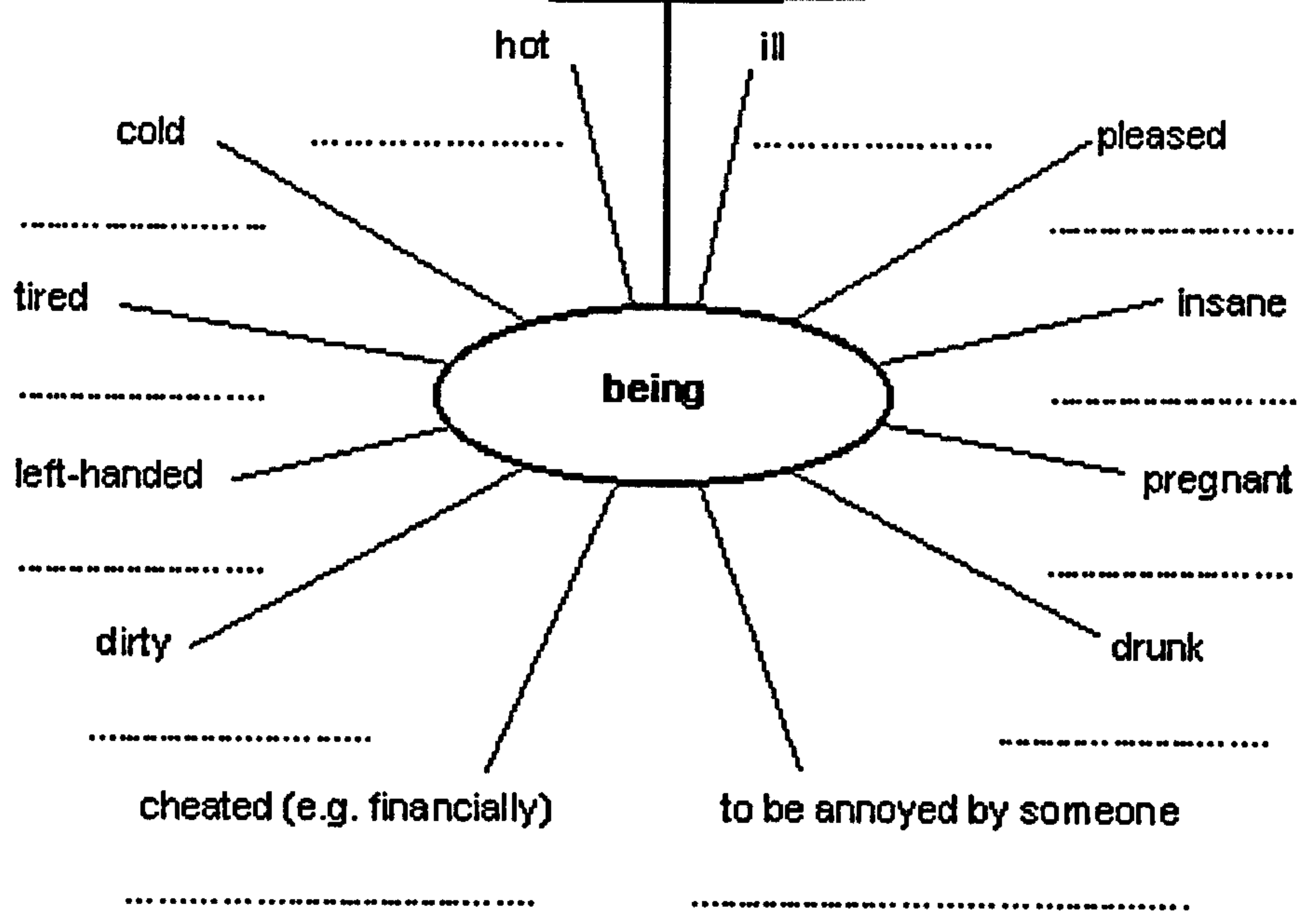
As part of the general revision of the SuRE methodology (Asprey *et al.* 2006), several changes were made to the content of the SRNs. Some of the existing networks were renamed, new ones were created, certain notion words were moved to different sub-networks which were considered more appropriate, and other notion words which were deemed unproductive were removed and substituted with new more productive ones.

A significant change was the renaming of two of the three titles which define the semantic fields reproduced in each SRN. Llamas' *Feelings, actions and states* and *The outside world* became *Being, saying and doing* and *Everyday life* respectively (figures 3.6 and 3.7), while the third one *People* remained the same (figure 3.8). A further change was the removal of the sections called 'any others' as they had proven to be unproductive. Besides, it was envisaged that fieldworkers who had particular lexical research interests, or wanted to give their informants the chance of suggesting any other words that they considered of interest for the study, could design their own SRNs and add them to the core ones.⁷

⁷ For a more detailed account of the changes made in the SRNs, see Asprey *et al.* (2006).



Being, Saying & Doing



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Figure 3.6: Revised *Being, Saying and Doing* SRN

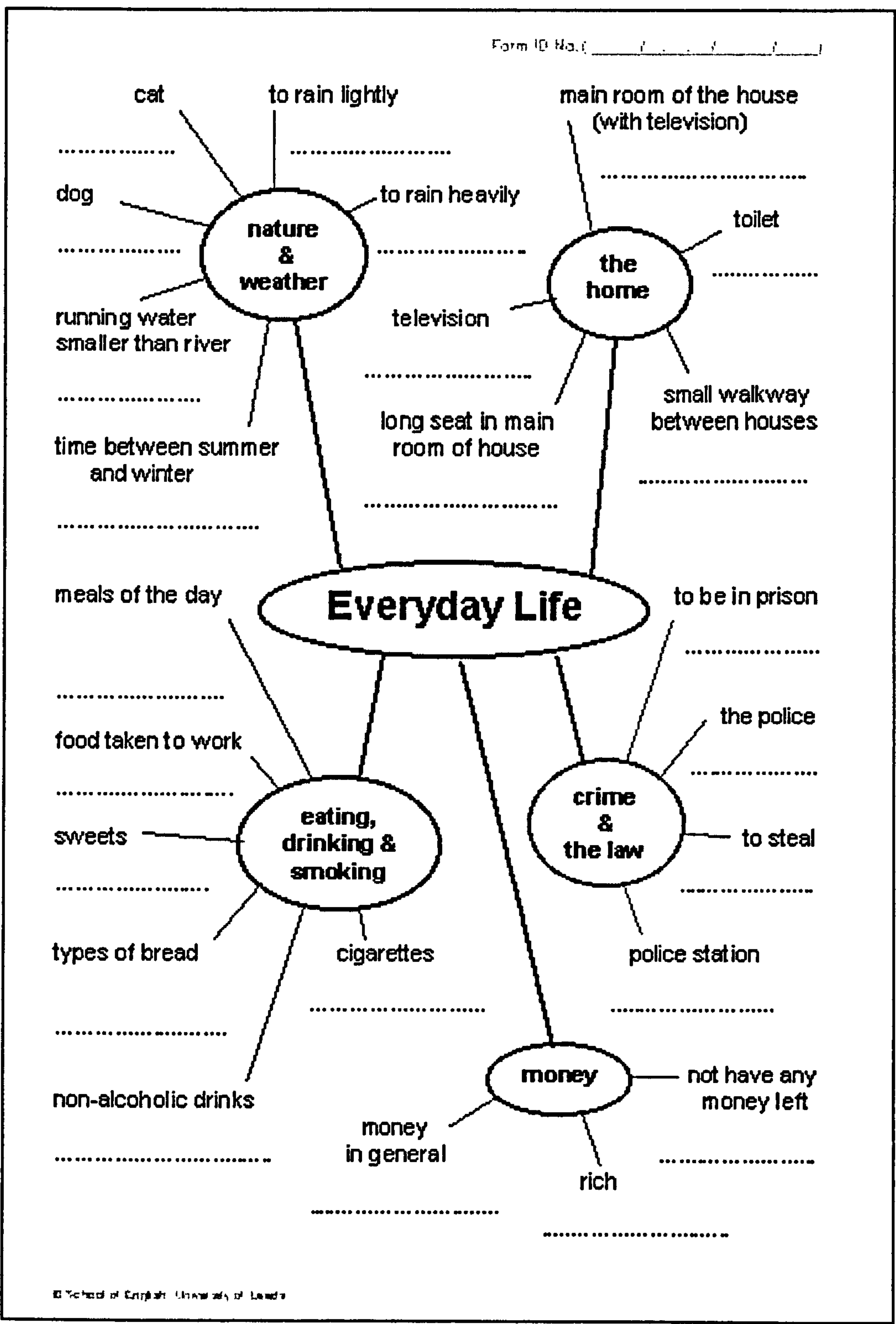


Figure 3.7: Revised *Everyday Life* SRN

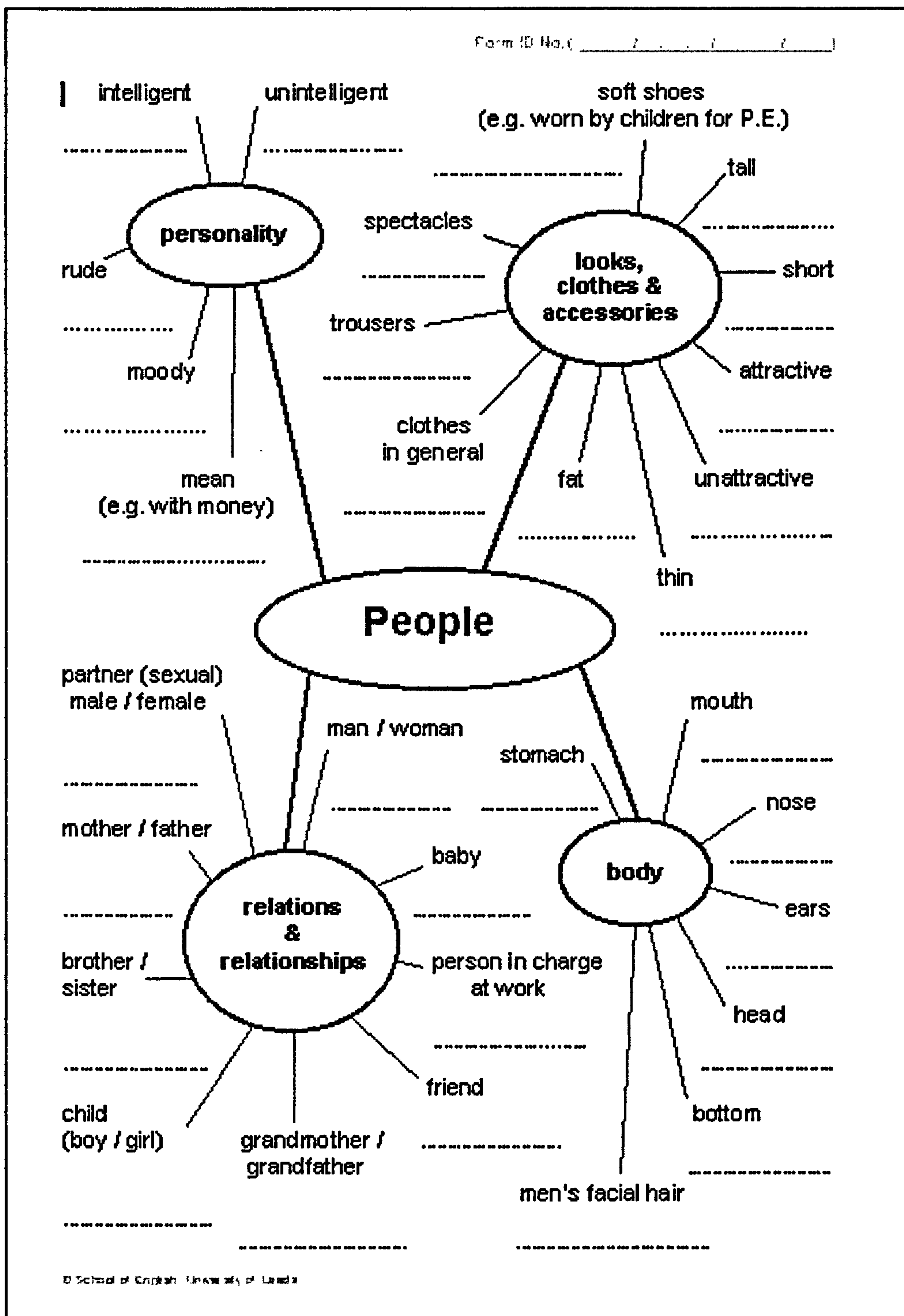


Figure 3.8: Revised *People* SRN

StE terms are used in the SRNs to prompt the informants so that they produce their dialect and informal variants: that is, the SRNs prompt informants by means of direct questioning. This elicitation technique is generally regarded as less time-consuming

than indirect questioning (Chambers and Trudgill 1998: 21-23). The benefit of direct questioning is that informants just have to produce the dialect words they use (merely a process of translation), whereas with indirect questioning there is more mental processing for the informants since they first have to interpret and then find the required lexical variants in their repertoire (first interpreting the prompt and then translating). The way in which the SRNs are administered seeks to avoid the possibility of informants feeling pressurised or as being under examination; this will be further discussed in section 3.2.3, below.

This section has introduced the revised core SuRE methodology pack: the instruction sheet, the biographical information sheet, the consent and confidentiality form and the SRNs. It was the revised version that was administered to informants in Sunderland, but, as we have seen, the core principles of this method remained untouched. Section 3.2.2 moves on to discuss how Llamas (2001) contemplated the possibility of using an expanded form of the SuRE methodology. She envisaged the introduction, jointly or separately, of a grammar questionnaire, an identity questionnaire, a word list and an identification index score.

3.2.2 Additions made to the SuRE questionnaire in Sunderland

The inherent versatility of the SuRE methodology allows researchers to adapt and/or introduce more sections without altering detrimentally the overall rationale. This flexibility makes the SuRE methodology a useful and valuable resource for conducting sociolinguistic research. As this research into the Sunderland dialect progressed, it was realised that there was scope to include a survey of the idiosyncrasies of Sunde grammar and identity; this would expand the research to create a more substantial linguistic and ideological profile of the Sunderland community. The language questionnaire was designed to investigate whether stereotypical grammatical constructions, identified by previous studies of other North-eastern dialects (particularly Tyneside English), occurred in the Sunderland variety.⁸ While the implementation of this language questionnaire is beyond the scope of the research under discussion here, a more comprehensive explanation is included in appendix 2; the collation of the grammatical data collected will, in the future,

⁸ cf. Beal (1993a and 1993b); Beal and Corrigan (2002, 2005 and 2006); McDonald (1981).

constitute a supplement to this study of the Sunderland accent. More immediately pertinent, however, is the Identity Questionnaire, which is an attempt at collecting area-specific data relating to social and linguistic ideologies that contribute to the construction of the Wearside persona.

3.2.2.1 IDENTITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The identity questionnaire (IdQ) was an essential element in the questionnaire given the language ideological approach adopted for the Sunderland study. The IdQ aimed to elicit qualitative data on a number of issues of local identity. Sunderland people have developed a strong and characteristic local identity which is often embodied by the rivalry that they, 'Mackems', have with their 'Geordie' neighbours. This study intended to ascertain in what way these deeply rooted feelings may have an influence on the local language and explore general popular perceptions of the local and other regional varieties – namely TE and DuE – and of the geographical boundaries between Newcastle and Sunderland English. The examination of local language perceptions and ideologies would lead to an understanding of how Sunderland people as a speech community interpret the social meaning of variation and how they construct meaning.⁹

The IdQ (figures 3.9 and 3.10) was devised focusing upon some of the main local symbols: e.g. their football team, their dialect and their city. This would prompt the informants to speak about some of their perceptions and attitudes towards their language as a symbol of regional identity, and their area. That is, the questionnaire would try to elicit the informants' interpretation of their local symbols as opposed to the Geordie ones. The questions were phrased so that the informants had to answer at some length. Later, the information recorded would be used to seek explanations for the informants' language usage. Llamas points out that the extended answers, which as section 3.2.3 will explain would be discussed in the interview, would be useful 'should the informants' responses to the SRNs be insufficient for an analysis of informal speech' (Llamas 1999: 105). In addition, the last question in the questionnaire asked the informants to draw on a map the boundary that separated Geordies from Mackems. The introduction of this question, based on the principles of

⁹ All this is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

perceptual dialectology, aimed to reveal Sunderland people's mental maps and therefore how they delimited their community and separated it from other North-eastern communities (see Preston 2002). However, whilst the interest of perceptual dialectology lies in determining 'which linguistic varieties of a language are thought to be distinct' by speakers or 'what mental maps of regional speech areas [...] they have' (Preston 2002: 51), this question made no reference to language so that in the interview the informants could explain whether their boundary was based on linguistic or non-linguistic factors.

In order to be consistent in the use of the terms *Geordie*, *Mackem*, *Tyneside* or *Newcastle English* and *Sunderland English*, the first two questions asked: (1) 'Do you consider yourself a Mackem, a Geordie or neither of them? Why?' and (2) 'What accent do you think you have (e.g. Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham accent, etc)?' Thus, the terms *Geordie* and *Mackem* would only refer to the actual identities, and *Tyneside/Newcastle English* and *Sunderland English* to the respective local dialects. The penultimate question on the questionnaire (is it necessary to speak with a Mackem accent to be a Mackem?) is an adapted version of one of the questions Trudgill (1983a) used in his study of language contact, language shift and identity in Arvanitika-speaking communities in Greece.

3.2.2.2 IDENTIFICATION SCORE INDEX

To supplement the qualitative identity data collected through the identity questionnaire, an Identification Score Index (ISI) was used (figure 3.11). This would allow me to quantify the strength of the participants' identification with their city. The ISI used in Sunderland is largely the one used by Llamas in Middlesbrough (1999) with some small alterations. The latter was an expanded and adapted version of the ISI originally used by Underwood (1988) in his study of variation in Texas English.

Underwood aimed to test Le Page's theory of 'acts of identity' and determine 'why people – especially those who are socially and geographically mobile – develop particular accents instead of others that are also available to them in their linguistic milieu' (Underwood, 1988: 408). Underwood designed his Index of Texan Identification following Reed's claim (1983 in Underwood 1988) that, since identification is 'an emotional construct' whereby individuals express their closeness to members of this group, and not a determinant of group membership, it is possible to

measure the strength of an individual's identification with a particular group. This consisted of three questions with three possible scored answers each: a score of 3 was assigned to the answer most locally oriented, a score of 2 indicated a neutral answer and a score of 1 was the least locally oriented.

Farm ID No: _____

Identity Questionnaire

1. Do you consider yourself a ~~Mackem~~, a Geordie or neither of them?
.....
2. What accent do you think you have (e.g. Sunderland, Newcastle, Durham accent, etc)?
.....
3. Is your accent different from the accent of nearby cities such as Newcastle and Durham? Can you think of any specific ways in which it is different? For instance, are there any words which are pronounced differently?
.....
.....
4. Are you proud of your accent or would you rather not have any accent at all?
.....
5. Would you prefer to have a different accent? If so, which one? Why?
.....
6. Do you think it is good to have an accent? Why or why not?
.....
7. Have you ever felt embarrassed about your accent? When? Why?
.....
.....
8. Are there different accents in the North-east? If there are, what are they? Do you like them? Can you tell them apart easily?
.....
.....
.....
9. Where do you like going in your spare time within Tyne and Wear? What is your favourite shopping centre?
.....
10. What football team do you mainly support? Who is its main rival?
.....
.....

Figure 3.9: Sunderland identity questionnaire – page 1

11. What do you think of Sunderland, as a city?

.....
.....

12. Do you think that Newcastle is generally more favoured than Sunderland and because of that it tends to get the best facilities? Why or why not?

.....
.....

13. Who are generally more friendly Newcastle or Durham people? Why?

.....
.....

14. Is it necessary to speak with a Sunderland accent to be a Mackem?

.....

15. What are the main reasons for the Geordie-Mackem rivalry?

.....
.....

16. Do you find it offensive to be called 'Mackem'? Why?

.....

17. In the map of the North-east you have below, draw a line where you would place the boundary that separates the areas where Geordies and Mackems live.

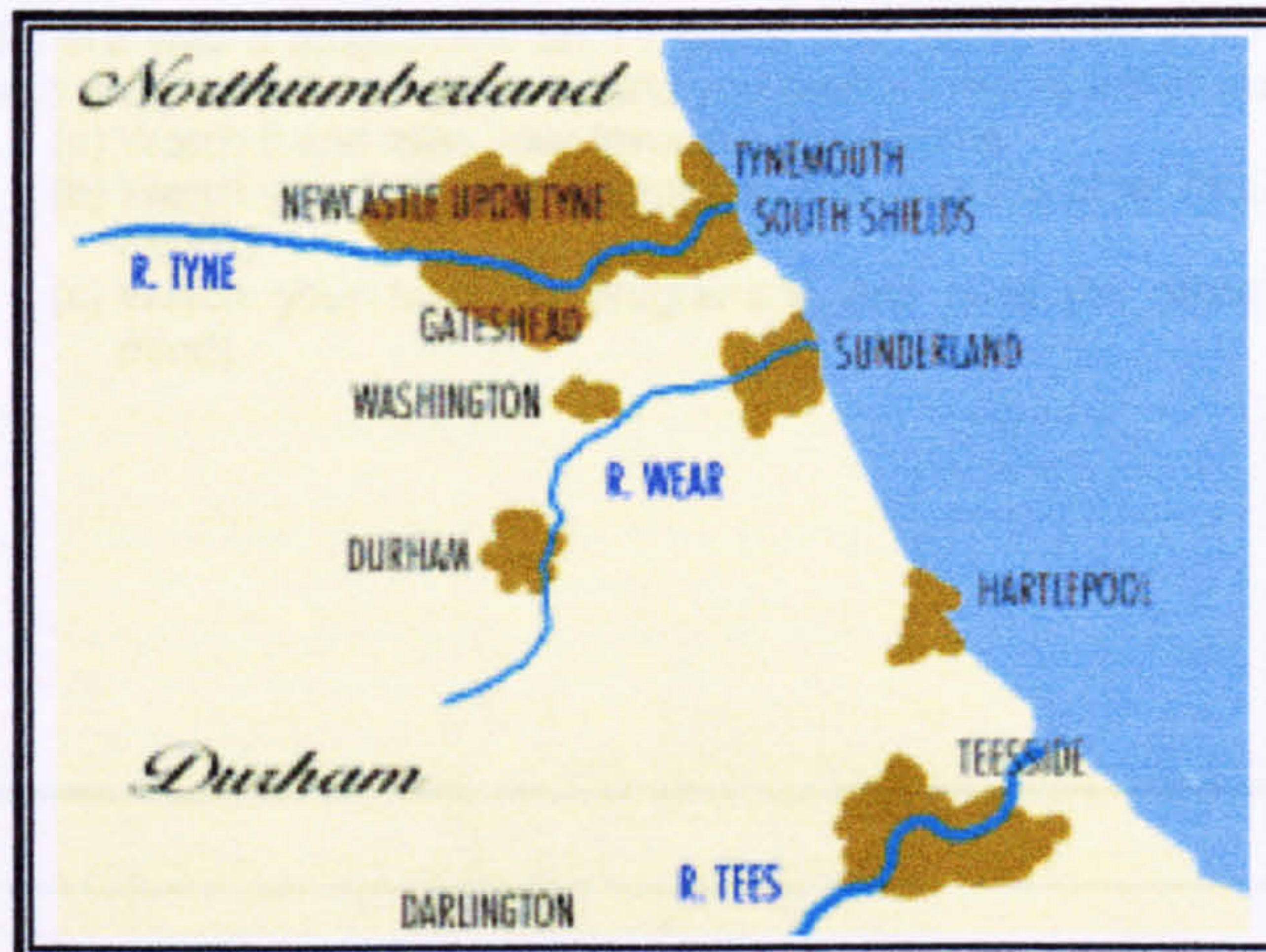


Figure 3.10: Sunderland identity questionnaire – page 2

Identification Score Index

1. If you were on holiday and saw someone you had never seen before but thought they came from Sunderland (e.g. you overheard their accent and recognised it, they were wearing the local football shirt), would you:
 - (a) Feel compelled to go and ask where they were from and strike up a relationship
 - (b) Feel you had something in common but not do anything about it
 - (c) Not feel any differently than you would towards any other stranger
2. Would you say you feel close to and you have something in common with people from Sunderland in general (that is people you don't know personally), or would you say you don't feel any closer to them than to people from somewhere else?
 - (a) Feel closer to people from Sunderland
 - (b) Don't feel any closer to people from Sunderland than to other people
 - (c) Don't know, can't say
3. Would you prefer your child's school teacher to be:
 - (a) A person with a local accent
 - (b) A person who spoke 'standard' English with a 'standard' accent
 - (c) It wouldn't matter what accent they had
4. If you were voting in a local election, would the fact that a candidate was a local person persuade you to vote for them?
 - (a) Yes, it would
 - (b) No, it wouldn't
 - (c) Don't know
5. If you wanted to leave something to a charitable organisation would you choose:
 - (a) A local one
 - (b) A national / international one
 - (c) Don't know, depends on the cause
6. If there was a programme on TV about your home town which clashed with your favourite programme and you couldn't record either would you:
 - (a) Watch it and miss your favourite programme
 - (b) Watch your favourite programme and miss the other (but wish you hadn't)
 - (c) Watch your favourite programme and miss the other (but not mind)

Figure 3.11: Sunderland Identification Index Score

Having introduced the three elements that were added to, or adapted for, the core SuRE methodology for this study (the language and identity questionnaires and the

Identification Score Index), the following section turns to explain how the SuRE questionnaire is administered to informants and what its role is in the interview.

3.2.3 The SuRE administration technique: the interview

The SuRE pack, either in its core or expanded form, is given to the informants a few days before the interviews so that they can go through it, and complete the various sections of the questionnaire at their own pace. This gives them plenty of time to think about their responses carefully, consider the lexical items and grammatical features they generally use, and, if they wish, discuss them with other people. Once the questionnaire has been completed, the informants are interviewed by the fieldworker in pairs, where their answers to the questionnaire are discussed.

3.2.3.1 PROS AND CONS OF COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN ADVANCE

By giving the SuRE pack to the informants in advance, the researcher is letting them know beforehand what the content of the interview will be. The purpose of this is to overcome some of the problems which are usually reported to be associated with this kind of interview which aims to elicit linguistic variation.

To start with, the use of direct questioning, briefly discussed in section 3.2.1.4, above, could be regarded as a potential pitfall of the SuRE questionnaire. Dialectologists have often been concerned with the use of direct questions in dialect surveys because these may bias the informants' responses. If presented with the standard forms and asked to produce equivalent informal/dialectal variants, the informant may feel unnecessarily pressurised, resulting in a decreased amount of data. It is probably a less natural way of trying to induce the informants' linguistic variants compared to indirect questions. The latter type, by contrast, avoids standard notions and prompts the informants by using a 'naming by definition' or 'naming in the presence of an object' technique. The mental processing generated by this type of question is believed to be more natural and spontaneous – i.e. less answer-leading (Chambers and Trudgill 1998: 21-23). Nevertheless, there seem to be more advantages related to the use of direct questioning in the SuRE questionnaire than disadvantages:

- (a) Direct questions may make the speakers feel less reluctant to fill in the questionnaire, making them more at ease as the feeling that they are being tested, which could be triggered by indirect questions, is probably lessened by this type of prompt.
- (b) Direct questioning is generally less time consuming as there is not so much mental processing involved as there is in indirect questioning - in the latter the subjects first have to identify what they are being asked about and then come up with suitable responses.
- (c) As the informants have some days to complete the questionnaire, there is not such risk that their mind could go blank during the interview, as could be the case if asked to provide an immediate response to a prompt. The time span they have to complete the questionnaire should be enough for them to think about their responses. Moreover, it should help them to become more aware of the linguistic features they generally use, as they are bound to pay special attention to their speech during this time, thus enabling them to distinguish between those features that are indeed used in their area and those they themselves use.

All in all, the SuRE methodology shows concern for making the informants feel at ease throughout the whole data elicitation process – not only when filling in the questionnaire, but also during in the interview.

3.2.3.2 THE INTERVIEW

Despite all these efforts to make the SuRE data elicitation process easier and less intimidating for the informants, the SuRE methodology still uses the most popular method employed in variationist research: the interview. It does not matter how well the fieldworker has prepared the actual interview, or how enjoyable and interesting s/he tries to make it for the informant, an interview is always an interview and there are principles that govern this speech event. Milroy and Gordon (2003: 61-62) explain that:

[m]uch of the difficulty involved in interviewing stems from the fact that an interview in western society is a clearly defined and quite common speech event to which a formal speech style is appropriate. It generally involves dyadic interaction between strangers, with the roles of the two participants being quite clearly defined. *Turn-taking rights* are not equally distributed as they are in conversational interaction between peers. Rather, one participant (the interviewer) controls the discourse in the sense of both selecting topics and choosing the form of questions. The interviewee on the other hand, by agreeing to be interviewed, has contracted to answer these questions co-operatively.

So it is this imbalance between the discourse roles of the interviewer and interviewee that the SuRE method aims to overcome. Giving the SuRE questionnaire to the informants well in advance may help to reduce the chances that the interview could be perceived as some kind of test, and would hopefully make the interviewee feel less at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the interviewer.

Counteracting the effect of the asymmetrical roles of the interviewer and interviewee has been a matter of concern in variationist studies. To overcome this problem, Labov proposed (i) that fieldworkers introduce themselves as learners placing the interviewee as the dominant figure in the interview¹⁰ (Labov (1984) in Milroy and Gordon 2003: 62); and (ii) that groups rather than individuals be studied because the fieldworker is then outnumbered. He argues that the vernacular is the property of the group, not of the individual, and consequently the result of interaction. (Labov 1972a: 205-213, 256-257).¹¹

This is precisely the way in which the SuRE fieldworker approaches informants. They are interviewed in pairs so that they can interact amongst themselves and so that the interviewer is outnumbered and can, as much as possible, operate outside the conversation. This should lessen the formality of the interview situation and make them feel more at ease than in a one-to-one interview with the fieldworker. A one-to-one interview is more likely to make them more aware of their speech and, as a result, accentuate the effects of the ‘observer’s paradox’.

Llamas (2001) envisaged that, in the SuRE interview, the informants should be socially paired, and the pair of informants should ideally belong to the same social class and social circles. This is to avoid any speech style accommodation and ensure

¹⁰ Note, however, that Labov was not the first one who advised fieldworkers to allocate their informants the role of ‘instructors’. The SED fieldworkers’ technique was ‘to establish as speedily as they could the ‘master-pupil’ relationship, the informant being the ‘master’, the fieldworker the ‘pupil’” (Orton and Dieth 1962-1971: 127)

¹¹ As chapter 2 indicated, however, in the last couple of decades, some variationist studies have employed ‘participant observation’, an ethnographic data-collection method, as an alternative to the traditional sociolinguistic interview.

that informal and natural speech is elicited. Furthermore, the risk of obtaining unnatural speech is further minimised if the pair of speakers already know each other beforehand, since as Nordberg ((1980) in Milroy and Gordon 2003: 67) argues:

[t]he members of the group themselves exercise social constraint on one another's language. It would be quite unacceptable for someone in the group to put on an act during the recording and use a form of language which was not normally used in that speech community or among the individual speakers. The more closed the social network of the discussion group is, the stronger the social pressure will be to speak in accordance with the group norm. But even in the case of discussion groups which must be described as open social networks we are on safer ground when it comes to the authenticity of the language used than we are in the case of an interview.

This, therefore, suggests that the fact that the informants know each other makes it less likely that they will change their speech style towards a more formal register and will adhere to the way they normally speak to each other in everyday life situations when the interviewer asks them to compare and discuss their respective responses.

Other social variables that could have an effect on the interaction between the informants could be age, sex, interest, status and/or ethnicity (Milroy 1987b: 50). Although most of these can be controlled and predicted, others, like people's interests, obviously depend on every person's character and can hardly be predicted.

The SuRE interviewer's role, therefore, is to make sure that the interviewees go through all their responses for the SRNs and that all the items are covered satisfactorily as well as to keep the discussion going between them around the following issues:

whether informants use the variants or only know them, situations in which they would be used, connotations and collocations associated with the variants, as well as anything else which the informants might initiate (Llamas, 1999: 103).

In addition to this, the interviewer can prompt them to speak about,

the use of intensifiers, gender differences in use, age differences in use, varying degrees of a state, additional notion words or senses of notion words given, all of which can provide additional information and extend the discussion (Llamas, 1999: 103).

In the questionnaire, the informants note down any of this additional information in a different coloured ink.

Up to now we have seen what the SuRE methodology consists of and how it is administered. Although, as mentioned above, to this date the SuRE database has not yet been created, the SuRE method has proved to be a useful one, especially for researchers who have adopted a language ideological approach to the study of variation and are thus interested not only in collecting linguistic data but also attitudinal/ideological data that allows them to provide socially meaningful accounts of language variation and change. The fact that, in the interview, informants are encouraged to discuss their answers to the SRN also seems to play an important part in the success of this methodology since, whilst they are explicitly and consciously discussing lexical items, they seem to forget about other aspects of their language such as accent or grammar, which (we must not forget) are also targeted by the SuRE methodology. Also, the discussion of issues of local identity raised in the identity questionnaire seems to divert their attention from their language. It is for these reasons that the SuRE method was thought to be an appropriate one for the study of the Sunderland dialect and identity.

The following section turns to defining the size and social features of the Sunderland population sample and details how informants were recruited for the study.

3.3 OTHER METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES: SUNDERLAND POPULATION SAMPLE

An important issue facing sociolinguistic research is the selection of the population sample. Whilst the researcher strives to identify as representative a sample as possible, true representativeness is arguably unachievable. Indeed, Milroy and Gordon argue that researchers are best advised to identify speaker types in advance of the study, and subsequently seeking out 'a quota of speakers who fit the specified categories' (2003: 30). For the purposes of this Sunderland study, the speaker types were identified, following Sankoff, by: (i) defining the geographical and social boundaries of the linguistic community to be studied; (ii) setting the sample size; and (iii) stratifying the sample (1980: 50-51).¹² Also, it was necessary to find a way of contacting people willing to participate in the survey.

¹² This section deals mainly with the last two. The definition of the boundaries of the Sunderland community is discussed in chapter 4.

In defining the geographical and social boundaries of the linguistic community to be studied, only people from Sunderland (or those who, despite being born somewhere else, had lived in Sunderland since their early years and considered themselves native) were included in the sample population. However, present-day society is very mobile and nowadays it is very difficult to find people who have not lived away from their place of origin at least for a short while – most usually for professional or educational purposes. Thus, informants were not rejected for having lived outside the Sunderland area, and the minimum threshold of acceptance for those born outside the area was that both their parents were Sunderland natives.

In order to contact informants in Sunderland, I sent a letter to *The Sunderland Echo* (see appendix 3). Assuming that this local newspaper attracts a diverse readership in and around Sunderland, it appeared a good local forum through which to make initial fieldwork contacts. Then, having contacted the first few informants in this way, I would adopt a ‘snowball’ technique (also known as network sampling) to recruit the rest of my informants¹³. Thus, after interviewing people, I asked them whether they had any friends or family who would be willing to participate in my study. In this way, I approached new informants, not as a stranger but as a ‘friend of a friend’. However, I also bore Sankoff’s caution in mind that:

one must rely on the stratification scheme, and on deliberate attempts to diversify, in order to ensure a degree of representativity of the sample and to avoid sampling just a small circle of personal friends (1980:52).

In this way, building upon the initial eclectic responses to the newspaper advert, I could begin collecting language samples that were socially and culturally diverse, and could subsequently allow the population sample to ‘snowball’ via informants’ social networks until the pre-defined speaker types were all satisfactorily represented.

3.3.1 Stratification of the population sample

The aim of the present study was to obtain an accurate picture of how language varied locally across different generational and gender groups as well as speakers of different socio-economic status. It was expected that, as previous variationist studies in the North-east have demonstrated (e.g. Llamas 2001), language usage and the way

individuals identify with their community would vary in correlation with these three social variables. For this reason, the population sample was initially stratified according to age, gender and social class. However, half-way through the fieldwork, it became necessary to re-assess the social class variable because of informants' sometimes unintentionally misleading self-classifications (more fully discussed in 3.3.1.2). Firstly, I turn to review the age variable; in particular what minimum age was established and what age cohorts were selected.

3.3.1.1 AGE VARIABLE

The Sunderland informants were classified into three age groups:

- (a) Young adults: 16-30 years old
- (b) Middle-aged: 31-50 years old
- (c) Older: 50 and over

The division was not made arbitrarily but was instead made in order to facilitate an *apparent time* approach to language variation, whereby 'people of different ages can be taken as representative of different times' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 35). The group (a) age range was chosen since its members would have grown up knowing Sunderland only as part of Tyne and Wear¹⁴; the group (b) age range would represent speakers who were either young children or adolescents at the time when Sunderland became part of Tyne and Wear having been part of the County Durham political/administrative region; and group (c) represents those speakers whose language usage/patterns were already well established by the time of Sunderland's incorporation into the Tyne and Wear metropolitan county. These three age ranges group together individuals who may share some crucial experiences, practices and

¹³ For a full discussion of this approach see Milroy and Gordon (2003: 30-33).

¹⁴ I resolved not to include any subject under the age of 16, mainly due to the level of involvement that the SuRE methodology required from the informants. Although adolescents, in particular, have been found to lead many language changes as a result of their heightened engagement in identity construction (Eckert 1997: 163), to some extent their speech would be fairly well represented by sixteen and seventeen-year-old informants. The decision of establishing this minimum age limit was also made on the grounds that 16+ speakers would be easier to find and access, since security measures in schools have been tightened to the point that clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau is required for anyone intending to work with under-sixteens.

values which relate to their life stage. This is the kind of classification Eckert favours when approaching age as a sociolinguistic variable (1997). She points out that age is not just 'a homogeneous continuum based on calendar time, it is imbued with meaning by a variety of life landmarks, which are not necessarily evenly distributed over the life course' (1997: 155). Like Llamas' study (2001), the Sunderland study intended to look at language variation and the effect local language and social ideologies could have in the motivation of change. Thus, the three age groups were defined bearing in mind the change in political boundaries undergone by Sunderland in 1974, as this could have led to changes in local identities and, possibly, language.

Each age group is likely to have had different life experiences and to have lived different events, and, therefore, they can be expected to show differences in language usage. Generally, language seems to go through various developmental stages as individuals pass from one life stage to another. Children are still in the process of learning the language and acquiring a sociolinguistic competence to be able to distinguish the social functions of some linguistic variables. Adolescence is the stage when individuals focus on the development of the social use of the vernacular. This group, as has been already mentioned, often leads the others in language changes and in the use of the vernacular due to the fact that they are building their own identity. Then in adulthood, language becomes slightly more conservative and the use of vernacular variants decreases. This is generally reversed in the older age groups whose language seems to become less conservative and the level of use of dialect variants is closer to that of the youngest age-groups. Whereas Trudgill (1988) associates this with a lower educational background, Eckert argues that this reversal of patterns in the older age groups reflects the decrease of social pressures when people leave the professional marketplace (Eckert 1997:165).

3.3.1.2 SOCIAL CLASS VARIABLE RE-EVALUATED

Although the intention was initially to have a representation of working and middle class Sunderland speakers in the sample, as mentioned in the introduction to 3.3.1, this turned out to be more troublesome than it had been at first expected.

The *About You* sheet from the SuRE pack asked informants to define their social class by self-assessment. I was aware that, given the way in which the question on social class had been worded (Can you say which social class you belong to? If so,

which?), there was a possibility that informants would decline to give this information, or they could provide unintentionally misleading information. In such a case, I would either try to get them to discuss the issue during the interview, or I could resort to the question about occupation to make an estimate of the informants' class. So this field would be regarded as a supplementary to the social class question: it would either help to support the informants' self-assessment of social class or be used to estimate their socio-economic level if it became necessary.

As the fieldwork progressed, I noticed that almost all of the informants defined themselves as working class, even those who, judging from their education, occupation and residential area, I would have classified as being middle class. This led me to reconsider this social variable. Finding middle-class speakers in Sunderland was proving to be a harder task than had been anticipated. Those informants who might more reasonably have been classified as middle class, actually appeared to feel more comfortable in labelling themselves as working class; and, by contrast, some of those whose background appeared to place them as working class, actually identified themselves as middle class.

The Sunderland community thus seems to widely regard itself as working class. This could be due to the historical industrial and economic background of the city, which for centuries was based primarily on shipbuilding and coalmining. Recent research, however, suggests that a class revolution is underway in Britain, whereby class membership does not seem to be determined by income, type of occupation and place of residence anymore (Maley 2006). Findings have revealed that, in spite of the increase in working-class incomes in the last couple of decades, half of the British population still identify themselves as working class. Paradoxically, a large proportion of those who define themselves as working class are positioned amongst the section of the population with the highest income, whereas a large number of those who regard themselves as middle class are within the sector with the lowest incomes:

Rich Ordinary Britons, or ROB's, are the 2.67 million people who regard themselves as working class even though they are in the top fifth of the population in terms of what they own.

Just below them are the High Earning Workers (HEWs), the 534,000 people who earn over £100,000 per household, but who still say they are working class. And last but not least are the Suburban Asset Lightweights, or SALs, a set of 1.84 million people who say they are middle class, but who are in terms of wealth in the bottom fifth of the population (Maley 2006).

This closely resembled the problem I had with my informants' self-assessment of social class. In spite of the rise in incomes, people were still reluctant to use the 'middle-class' label. Consequently, since my informants' self-assessment did not seem to be based on socio-economic factors, but possibly on the social groups with which they identified, I discarded this social variable and approached it exclusively as another issue that would need to be regarded as a component of the local identity. The sample, then, would only be stratified by gender and age. Nevertheless, since the speakers' occupation was being recorded, close attention would be paid to the possible effect of occupation on language usage. This notion closely parallels the concept of the linguistic market, where 'language constitutes symbolic capital' and the speakers' language usage is adjusted in the workplace because the standard language is perceived as being more readily 'convertible into economic capital' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 97) – especially in occupations where the speaker is in regular contact with the wider public.¹⁵

Given the wide range of occupations, the participants were grouped according to 'type of occupation'. In order to do this, the *Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC2000)*¹⁶ used by the Office for National Statistics for the derivation of the *National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)* was followed. SOC ranks jobs according to skill level and skill content, where 'skill' is 'defined in terms of the nature and duration of the qualifications, training and work experience required to become competent to perform the associated tasks in a particular job' (SOC2000, vol 1: p ix). The classification consists of nine major groups, each of which contains sub-major, minor and unit groups. The major groups are the following:

1. Managers and Senior Officials
2. Professional Occupations
3. Associate Professional and Technical Occupations
4. Administrative and Secretarial Occupations
5. Skilled Trades Occupations
6. Personal Service Occupations
7. Sales and Customer Service Occupations
8. Process, Plant and Machine Operatives

¹⁵ This is further discussed in chapter 6 (section 6.4.2).

9. Elementary Occupations

SOC2000 volume 2 provides a detailed index of job titles which allows us to consistently assign individuals to their corresponding groups (major, sub-major, minor and unit).¹⁷ For example, MF39's occupation, nursery-school teacher, is coded in *SOC2000* as 2315. This code places her in the 'primary and nursery education teaching professionals' *unit* group. This group is part of the 'teaching professionals' *minor* group (code 231), which in turn belongs to the 'teaching and research professionals' *sub-major* group (code 23). And, finally, this is one of the sub-groups within the 'professional occupations' *major* group.

For the purpose of the present study, however, the Sunderland informants were only grouped by major occupational groups. This classification is shown in table 3.2:

Group 1: Managers and Senior Officials	
MF26	Centre manager
Group 2: Professional Occupations	
YF36	BA / Receptionist
YF06	Student teacher
MF39	Nursery school teacher
YM05	Student teacher
YM43	Architecture student
MM14	Academic / Journalist
MM28	Secondary school teacher
Group 3: Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	
MF32	Young persons personal adviser
MM19	Careers adviser
MM20	Young persons personal adviser
OM12	Fire officer in Sunderland for 26 years / Retired in 1988 / Magistrate for the last 15 years
Group 4: Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	
OF13	Clerical, Post-office counter clerk
OF38	Ward clerk
Group 5: Skilled Trades Occupations	
YM33	Motor vehicle technician
YM34	Motor vehicle technician
OM10	Electrical engineer

(Continued)

¹⁶ SOC2000: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/soc2000.asp

¹⁷ This can be downloaded from http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/soc2000.asp

Group 6: Personal Service Occupations	
OF08	Nursery nurse
OF17	Foster care worker
MM03	Teaching support
OM07 ¹⁸	Visitor services assistant at Sunderland Museums / Before he worked as shipyard welder on Wearside
Group 7: Sales and Customer Service Occupations	
YF09	Customer service advisor
Group 8: Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	
OM27	Miner (from 1950 to 1985) (made redundant)
OM31	Driver / Scaffolder (shipyards)
Group 9: Elementary Occupations	
MF23	Cleaner
Group 10: Full-time students	
YF01	YF35 and YM02
Group 11: Unemployed/Housewife	
MF04	Housewife
OF37	Housewife ¹⁹

Table 3.2: Informants grouped by major occupational groups

Whilst in the *NS-SEC* people over 16 in full-time education are classed as an independent category, it envisages that, depending on the purposes for which a socio-economic classification is required, they may be allocated to social groupings on the basis of the classification of their next of kin or household. This classification of the Sunderland informants according to their occupation was intended to group those who belonged to similar socio-economic backgrounds and who had received similar educational qualifications/vocational training. Furthermore, the type of occupation also determines the nature of individuals' social contacts and interactions. For this reason, the three younger informants who were in full-time secondary education (YF01, YM02 and YF35) were assigned to an independent category. However, YM05, YF06 and YM43 were allocated to group 2 given that they were in full-time university education and were already doing work-placements.

¹⁸ OM07 used to work as a welder before the closure of the shipyards and thus would have been classed in group 5 within the 'skilled metal and electrical trades' sub-major group ('Metal Forming, Welding And Related Trades' minor group). However, his current occupation at the time of the interview was visitor services assistant at the Sunderland Museums which situated him in group 6.

¹⁹ She actually explained in the interview that she was a 'display artist' or 'demonstrator'. However, this was just a hobby.

It is interesting to note how the informants from each age group are distributed across these nine occupational groups. Groups 1, 2 and 3, which are the ones which require a high level of academic qualifications (degree, postgraduate qualifications etc), or involve coordinating/directing businesses etc, contain exclusively younger and middle-aged informants. Seven out of the ten middle-aged are in these three groups. This would be symptomatic of a clear change over time whereby there has been an increase in the number of people who go on to higher education. Also, all the males who were, or had been, involved in manual occupations were either in group 5 or 8. The difference between these two groups is that, whereas jobs in group 5 require a level of skill resulting from substantial training, in group 8 no particular standard of education is required yet they involve a period of experience-related training.

My main concern with this classification of the informants is that the population sample was stratified according to age and gender. Consequently, some of the occupational categories are represented exclusively by males, others only by females, or by individuals from the same age group, and some of the categories contain only one person (e.g. groups 1, 7 and 9). This may be problematic when trying to ascertain what social factor may be responsible for a particular sociolinguistic pattern. For this reason, in the linguistic analysis in chapters 6, 7 and 8, the nine SOC groups may be merged into three categories, shown in table 3.3: groups 1, 2 and 3 will constitute category I; groups 4, 5 and 6 category II; and groups 7, 8 and 9 category III. This should make it easier to run and interpret statistical tests intended to identify any possible interactions between the 'occupation' variable and other social variables such as gender and/or age, since there will be fewer empty cells than if we consider each of the SOC groups separately.

	Young		Middle-aged		Older	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
CATEGORY I	2	2	3	4	--	1
CATEGORY II	--	2	--	1	4	2
CATEGORY III	1	--	1	--	--	2
STUDENTS	2	1	--	--	--	--
DOMESTIC	--	--	1	--	1	--

Table 3.3: Categories resulting from merging some of the SOC groups

3.3.2 Size of the population sample

The Sunderland sample was stratified according to two independent social variables, gender and age. This meant that each age and gender variant had to be equally represented in the population sample. So, out of the total number of informants recruited, half of them would have to be male and the other half female, and one third would have to be 16-30 years old, one third 31-50 and one third 50+. The problem with such stratification, as Milroy and Gordon explain, is that in order to provide representation of the speech of the different social types under analysis, then 'we will be obliged, if we want to make generalisations about any of these subgroups, to subdivide an already small sample' (2003: 29). As a consequence, we will be forced to make generalisations about the language of these sub-groups on the basis of very small numbers.

However, in variationist research, it is widely held that, given the highly demanding analysis involved, it is necessary to limit the number of informants to be recruited, if only for practical reasons. Also, given the relative homogeneity of linguistic usage, overly large speaker samples become redundant (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 28-29; Labov 1966: 180-181). Bearing this in mind, the Sunderland sample would include 30 subjects so that it would make it possible to reasonably argue that the data would serve as a reliable cross-section of the local variety.

In the case of this Sunderland study, given that three age-groups and the two gender variants were being considered, there were six cells to fill out, each cell having five speakers (table 3.4).²⁰

AGE-GROUP	GENDER	
	Male	Female
Young adults	5	5
Middle-aged	5	5
Elderly	5	5

Table 3.4: Stratification of the Sunderland sample

3.4 FIELDWORK

The fieldwork was conducted between June 2003 and November 2004. Finding informants who were willing to participate was not an easy task, and at times it was a rather slow process, but, in general, the network sampling technique worked out quite well and eventually I managed to gather the population sample needed.

Forty three people were interviewed in total (appendix 4). Nevertheless, for various reasons, thirteen of those had to be discarded from the final population sample that would be used in the analysis. First, too many speakers were interviewed for some of the categories that needed to be represented in the sample. Such was the case of elderly men and women and middle-aged men: 9, 7 and 7 respectively were interviewed. Many people from these three categories were willing to co-operate in my study, and it was difficult to reject them. To discard those that were superfluous, five of each were randomly selected. The second reason why so many informants were interviewed was that young/middle-aged females, and young male speakers particularly, were difficult to recruit. Often, many of them were recruited through a friend or family member and they consequently appeared to feel obliged to co-operate without really being overly interested, and the interviews with them were therefore rather unsuccessful. Even though they were being interviewed alongside people they already knew, they tended to be reticent, and did not provide enough data for their speech to be satisfactorily analysed. These informants were automatically discarded soon after the interview, and a replacement for them was sought. The only person who did not meet the profile required was a woman in her seventies who was from Tyneside and had lived in Sunderland since she married her husband from Sunderland. Despite being from Tyneside, I decided that since her husband was going to participate in the study, she could be interviewed with him so that they could interact with one another. Although she had to be removed from the final sample, the interview was very productive.

As far as was possible, the two informants in each interview knew each other. Six of the dyads consisted of husband and wife, although in one case the youngest daughter of the couple was included (this was the only case in which three people were interviewed together). Two of the younger dyads consisted of boyfriend and

²⁰ In a sample of 36 informants, where both genders, three age groups and two social classes had to be equally represented, each would be filled with only three subjects.

girlfriend, seven dyads were friends, two dyads were siblings, one dyad was father and daughter and one dyad a pair of sisters-in-law. Four informants, however, were interviewed individually as it was more convenient for them.²¹ Most of the interviews were conducted at the informants' houses – or the house of one of the informants in the dyad. However, three were conducted in the informants' work-places and one in the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition (University of Sheffield). Thus, most participants were intentionally interviewed in a familiar environment in the hope that it would make them feel more relaxed and at ease.

Unfortunately, I only managed to find one person from Washington (YM43),²² making it impossible to explore patterns of variation between Sunderland and Washington. Nevertheless, the remainder of informants were asked to discuss Washington and give their opinion about its being half-way between Sunderland and Newcastle but being part of the City of Sunderland county borough.

Despite these minor problems, the whole Sunderland corpus was eventually complete. It comprises 23 interviews which range in length from 45 minutes to two hours, and 43 completed SuRE questionnaires.

Chapter 3 has introduced the data-collection method employed, and has explained and justified the population sample used in this Sunderland study: the SuRE methodology and questionnaire were introduced, and alterations to them were justified; the method for recruitment of the population sample was discussed and the sample's stratification was explained; the final section presented a report of the data collection process and the problems that arose. Chapter 4 turns to the findings of this study; in particular, it examines the informants' attitudes towards their city, region, accent and other ideological issues that the data suggested were important in the local construction of identity.

²¹ Two of them were actually interviewed in Leeds and Sheffield respectively where they lived.

²² From now on, I will be using speaker identification numbers (IDs) for all the informants in order to maintain them anonymous. These IDs consist of two initial letters: the first of them assigns individuals to their age groups ('Y' stands for Younger speakers, 'M' for Middle-Aged, 'O' for the older generation) and the second of them refers to their gender group ('F' for Females and 'M' for Males).

Chapter 4

The Sunderland community and its identity:

Local attitudes and ideologies

As most visitors to Sunderland will attest, the rivalry with Newcastle never seems far from the city's collective imagination. As in many instances, the Sunderland-Newcastle rivalry exists between close neighbours (one only has to think of political rivalries between England and France, sporting rivalries between Manchester and Liverpool or religious rivalries in Northern Ireland). It is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to trace the origins of this North-east rivalry, but anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that it goes back as far as the English Civil War (mid-17th century). Other factors that have supposedly contributed to the tensions include trade and heavy industry (shipbuilding and coalmining, for example, are seen as strong symbols of Sunderland for those within and outside the community) (Dodds 2001; House 1969; 172).

This anecdotal evidence, however, seems rather at odds with the data that will be presented in this chapter. While informants occasionally mentioned the Civil War, and many referenced the industrial origins of the rivalry, according to them these factors did not seem to be the principal drivers of the rivalry today. What seemed to supersede these historical events were things like football, regional allocation of development funds, and the tendency for much of the rest of Britain to consider Sunderland part of the 'Geordie' territory. For example, while only two-thirds of the population sample claimed to support Sunderland F.C, 92% identified football as being one of the prime motivators for sustaining the rivalry with Newcastle.

This chapter will look in some detail at how the Sunderland community is created and imagined by its constituent members. The manner in which this creation is achieved and sustained will be analysed through an exploration of the attitudinal/ideological data collected. To this end, the chapter is divided into four parts: section 4.1 will discuss the political, administrative and ideological boundaries of the Sunderland community; section 4.2 will explore the qualitative attitudinal data relating to the establishment of symbols and ideologies that help define those boundaries; section 4.3 presents the quantitative attitudinal data elicited via the

Identification Score Index; and section 4.4 reveals how the qualitative and quantitative data were compounded in order to create an Index of Sunderland Affiliation.

4.1 THE SUNDERLAND COMMUNITY: POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

One of the core objectives of this study was to ascertain whether the political boundaries of the City of Sunderland coincided with the boundaries of the Sunderland community as perceived by its members. In other words, do the political boundaries reflect the ideological boundaries of the community? Do Sunderland people identify with the political boundaries? Do they delimit a community united by a common sense of identity? In order to ascertain the answer to these questions, a population sample was drawn from within the current political boundaries of the City of Sunderland¹ (see map 4.1) and comprised informants who were either natives of Sunderland, or else had lived the vast majority of their lives in the city and/or environs.

As we will see, when considering the data collected from informants, almost all define the Sunderland community as an ideologically coherent social unit whose identity predominantly derives from its opposition to the Newcastle/Geordie identity. In addition, according to the informants, it seems one of the biggest threats to this Sunderland identity is the fact that people from outside the North-east make little or no distinction between the various communities within that region (Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough being the most populous).²

4.1.1 Political boundaries

The areas that are today considered to constitute the North-east of England, i.e. Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Teesside, did not acquire the present political distribution until the re-organisation of county boundaries in 1974. Until then, two of the rivers running across the North-east, the Tyne and the Tees, had worked not only as geographical boundaries but also as political ones. The traditional county of Northumberland used to run from the Scottish border to the river Tyne, thus

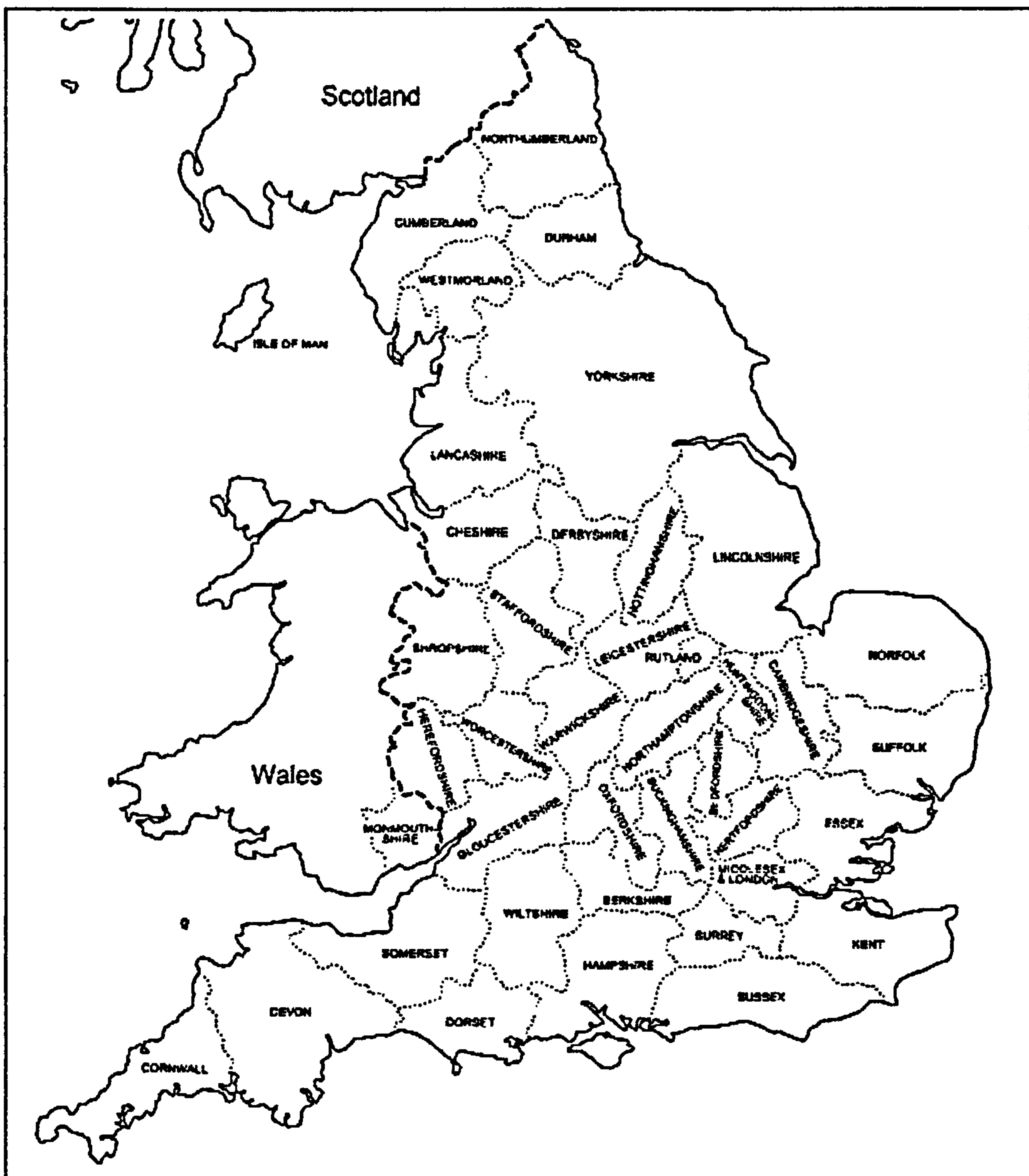
¹ The City of Sunderland includes the towns of Houghton-le-Spring, Hetton-le-Hole and Washington.

² For more about perceptions of accents and dialects of the North-east, see Montgomery (2005a, 2005b, 2007).

including Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside within its boundaries. County Durham, on the other hand, covered the areas from the Tyne to the Tees (including Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland), whilst all the areas on the southern bank of the river Tees, including Middlesbrough, belonged to the North Riding of Yorkshire (map 4.2).



Map 4.1: Tyne and Wear



Map 4.2: County boundaries before 1974 (Upton and Widdowson 1996: xxii)

The reorganisation of county boundaries in 1974, however, changed the political landscape affecting mostly those areas that lay around the traditional county boundaries (map 4.3). Consequently, the Tees conurbation was administratively removed from Yorkshire and grouped together to form a completely new county, County Cleveland, which, over time, would become increasingly associated with the North-east region (Llamas 2000). Further north, the metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear was created comprising districts which, until then, had belonged to Northumberland and County Durham respectively. Tyne and Wear consisted of five different administrative areas: Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside, on the

northern bank of the river Tyne, and South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland to the south of the Tyne. Tyne and Wear ceased to exist as a metropolitan county in 1986, and each of the five metropolitan districts or boroughs became unitary authorities assuming the administrative functions that, till then, had been the responsibility of the metropolitan county.³ The County of Tyne and Wear still exists as a legal entity. Similarly, County Cleveland was dissolved in 1996 and divided into four local authorities, each functioning as an independent county (Llamas 2000: 127).



Map 4.3: County boundaries after 1974 (Upton and Widdowson 1996: xxiii)

³ *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2007): <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9073994/Tyne-and-Wear>

In a similar vein to Llamas' (2000) findings about how the political/administrative realignment in Middlesbrough impacted upon local identities, the realignment of Sunderland's boundaries seems to have had a corresponding effect. Llamas argued that, as a consequence of the realignment, there had been a progressive reorientation of the local identity. The older group demonstrated 'a shared orientation towards Yorkshire', the middle-aged group revealed a 'considerable expression of a lack of identity in Middlesbrough' but indexed a Teesside identity, while the younger group had 'no memory, or in some cases no knowledge, of the Yorkshire identity' and indexed a Middlesbrough identity (pp.140-142).

The comparable shifts in Sunderland's boundaries appear to have had similar implications for the local identity. However, the biggest difference between the case of Middlesbrough and that of Sunderland is that Middlesbrough was not administratively conjoined with a city with which it had a longstanding and sometimes bitter rivalry. These changes, however, not only affected the former county borough of Sunderland, but also some small mining villages and towns around the city (Washington, Houghton-le-Spring, Fence Houses, and Hetton-le-Hole) which are now part of the City of Sunderland. These not only ceased being part of County Durham, but also became administratively attached to Sunderland. Therefore, in the Sunderland study, it was necessary to bear this in mind and try to determine: (i) whether, given that they are now politically part of the City of Sunderland, they have become accepted as part of the local ideological community; (ii) whether people consider these small localities to be part of the Sunderland community; and (iii) where possible, whether people from Washington, Houghton, Hetton and Fence Houses actually feel part of the City of Sunderland and therefore claim membership of the community.

4.1.2 Ideological boundaries: The local construction of meaning in social communities

According to Cohen (1985: 12), the concept of *community* 'seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference', meaning that, whereas the members of a perceived community share features with one another, these same features distinguish them from other communities. These similarities and differences make it possible to say where perceived communities begin and where they end – that is, they

allow ideological boundaries to be established. Thus, following Cohen, a community boundary may be understood as an entity which:

encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction. Boundaries are marked because communities interact in some way or other with entities from which they are, or wish to be, distinguished. [...] But not all boundaries, and not *all* the components of *any* boundary, are so objectively apparent. They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people in the same side (Cohen, 1985: 12)

In the light of this, community boundaries, apart from being established on the basis of relative similarities and differences that delimit communities, seem to be defined subjectively. The boundaries are thus a matter of feeling and belonging and reside in the minds of the members themselves, who attach meanings to them, and those within the boundaries share a series of symbols (values, beliefs, and ways of talking) that distinguish them from other communities. These symbols are constructs which provide people with the tools to make meaning and express their sense of belonging to the community (Cohen, 1985: 12-21).

From Cohen's view of the concept of community, it could be possible to find a lack of correspondence between the political and ideological boundaries of a community, since the political imposition of boundaries may transgress the pre-existing, and much more deeply imbedded, boundaries that have been established by the locally shared ideological symbols. Whereas the political could be regarded as imposed on the community for administrative purposes, the ideological are actually constructed by those to whom the boundaries are essential and meaningful – thus creating a sense of ownership of the boundaries. In addition, the boundaries belong not only to those within, but also to those without. In the case of Sunderland, there is a community wanting to distinguish itself from its neighbours (Tynesiders), and the boundaries serve the inverse function for those who live on its outer side, i.e. Tynesiders. Yet a recurring problem identified by the Sunderland sample in this study, refers to the fact that outsiders to these North-eastern communities, unaware of the ideological issues and symbols that go towards ideologically demarcating Sunderland and Tyneside, are generally unfamiliar with the salience of these subjective boundaries and are often completely unaware of the existence of this ideological divide, perhaps explaining why many refer to all North-easterners as 'Geordies'.

As insiders, the community members seem to have access to information which outsiders lack. This means that the outsider group will generally have only partial knowledge regarding the regional ideologies of identity and, therefore, will identify the community in a way that is at odds with local perceptions. Community members, by contrast, will be the only ones who are able to attach ideological meanings to – and interpret – the community. This phenomenon appears to justify the need to approach actual community members in order to obtain a fuller definition of the Sunderland community.

In the light of Cohen's definition of 'community', it was expected that the Sunderland informants would define the boundaries of their local community on the basis of the most distinctive and characteristic local symbols which they perceived were shared more or less unanimously by everyone. That is to say, they should be able to identify the main prerequisites which are essential for a person to be regarded as being local. It was expected that the informants would very likely use football allegiances and the local dialect as two of the most distinctive symbols that define the Sunderland community. By establishing boundaries on the basis of language usage, they would actually provide a definition of their speech community, which is commonly the language-based unit on which sociolinguistic studies tend to focus. However, given that the concept of speech community has been highly debated over the years, due to its abstract nature as a socio-geographic construct, the tendency of Sunderland people to refer to other local symbols in defining their community will contribute to a more complete critique of the Sunderland identity than that offered by one based solely on speech. Nevertheless, the concept of a speech community is still vital to this study and, before turning to explore how the informants actually perceived their local community, the following section reviews some of the definitions of speech community and how the term will be used here.

4.1.3 Speech communities

In this study, I take the view that the speech community is a socially-based unit which is actually perceived and delimited by its own members, rather than a geographically-based unit. Furthermore, in line with Corder's definition, I would argue that members of this imaginary community must perceive themselves as a group which, allowing for variation, uses the same language variety:

A speech community is made up of people who *regard themselves* as speaking the same language; it need have no other defining attributes. In other words, a speech community is defined in terms of its *beliefs*, not its language [*Italics in original*] (Corder 1973: 53)

That is to say, it is they who define the limits of the community. Within the confines of this community, language is thus regarded as an essential element in the local construction of meaning. Before going on to further develop the definition of speech community in this study, it will be useful to ascertain how this definition was established.

To date, the most widely accepted, or at least the most widely employed, definition of speech community has arguably been Labov's:

The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviour, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage (Labov 1972b: 120-121).

In his definition, Labov incorporated some emphasis on the fact that speakers have attitudes towards their language and are able to evaluate language norms within their community. He also discarded the idea that speakers within a speech community use language uniformly, which is what can be inferred from other definitions.⁴ So, in Labov's terms, in order to be able to speak of a speech community its members should be able to think of themselves as a community that shares a particular kind of linguistic behaviour and which shares the same attitudes towards language.

The problem with Labov's definition, according to Dorian (1982), is that it does not account for marginal speakers. Within a speech community (as in any social group) not all individuals can be expected to behave or perform in the same way and to abide by the norms that are characteristic of that particular group to the same extent. In her study of the East Sutherland Gaelic community, for example, Dorian identified speakers with different levels of proficiency in Gaelic which ranged from English-Scottish bilinguals, to passive bilinguals, and low proficiency semi-speakers. Yet she found that despite their low control of the dialect, low proficiency speakers were able to interact successfully with Gaelic speakers using the appropriate sociolinguistic norms, and were actually considered adequate members of the speech

⁴ cf. Hockett (1958: 8); Bloomfield (1933: 42); Gumperz (1962 and 1968 in Hudson 1996: 25).

community by the bilingual speakers. Any grammatically deviant utterances were usually overlooked because they generally followed the right sociolinguistic norms and inserted their utterances appropriately in the conversation.

Dorian, like Corder mentioned above, concluded from this apparent internal self-regulation by the group that members of a speech community are the ones who determine who does and does not belong to their group. Along the same lines, Hudson (1996) argues that:

the groups are those which the individual speaker perceives to exist, and not necessarily those which a sociologist might discover by objective methods: and the groups need not exhaust the whole population, but may represent the *clear* cases of certain social types (i.e. the 'prototypes' [...]) (Hudson 1996: 26)

This is precisely Le Page's approach, which takes us back to the idea that was developed in section 2.1, that speakers to some extent are able to modify or adapt their linguistic behaviour to demonstrate their membership of particular social groups. Le Page's 'Acts of Identity' theory claims that:

The individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behaviour so as to resemble those of the groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985: 181).

Whether we identify or not with those groups, however, is constrained by whether:

- (i) we can identify the groups
 - (ii) we have both adequate access to the groups and ability to analyse their behavioural patterns
 - (iii) the motivation to join the groups is sufficiently powerful, and is either reinforced or reversed by feedback from the groups
 - (iv) we have the ability to modify our behaviour
- (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985: 181)

Le Page's theory does not use the notion of speech community but just refers to social groups as a reality that speakers are able to identify. Then, having done so, they have the choice to adopt the linguistic norms characteristic of those groups in order to show their identification with the group.⁵ This approach also considers the possibility that there may be overlap between different groups – or, if we like, speech communities –

⁵ We need to acknowledge, though, that 'speech community' and 'group' may not be co-terminous: a speech community, for example, might include several groups.

and that the speaker may identify with, and therefore belong to, more than one group. Thus, an individual may identify at the same time with various groups, each of which may be based on gender, age, social class, region and so on.

This seems to run parallel not only to the CofP model introduced in section 2.1.3, but also to Cohen's approach to the concept of community. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet referred to CofPs as an aggregate of people drawn together by a common endeavour who, as a result, adopt a series of social practices to claim membership in that group and define their place in relation to other groups in society. Similarly, Cohen speaks of communities as sets of people who share a series of psychological and/or social symbols which differentiate them from other communities. Whether we refer to these shared properties either as social practices or as symbols, both Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, 2003) and Cohen (1998) seem to be referring to actual ways of showing membership in a group: behavioural norms, icons, beliefs, ways of talking etc: things speakers do and ways in which they interact. These are the group properties that are important for its members and will set them apart from other communities.

Hudson (1996) argues that from the moment that a group of people interact, we can expect them to share more than merely linguistic norms: culture, history, values etc, which means that:

different speech communities intersect in complex ways with one another – for example, a community defined in terms of interaction may contain parts of several communities defined in terms of shared language varieties (Hudson 1996: 27).

Thus, according to these approaches, communities are distinguished from other social groups by more than one symbol or social practice, not just by language. Yet, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998: 490) argue that 'sociolinguists still seldom recognize explicitly the crucial role of practice in delineating speech communities' and, although they do not dismiss this concept, they indicate that the CofP construct allows the researcher to view communities as 'defined by social engagement' given that 'it is this engagement that language serves, not the place and not the people as a collection of individuals'. Thus, looking into the use of language within the context of the CofP ultimately links language to the community at large.

Defining Sunderland exclusively in geographical terms would, therefore, provide a rather limited image of this North-eastern community. In Sunderland, the local dialect

is regarded as just one of the symbols that members of this community use to construct meaning, which is why it can only be understood if studied within a wider social picture – that is, in relation to other local symbols/practices to which it is linked – since, as Eckert (2000: 33) states:

[t]he designation of *speech community* confers on an aggregate of people the judgement that they constitute a sufficiently mutual sense-making unit that important aspects of linguistic organization are embedded in their social practice.

Furthermore, the Sunderland speech community ultimately needs to be described not as an isolated linguistic unit but in relation to the wider social and linguistic North-eastern continuum:

The definition of a particular speech community is, above all, a way of defining both the limitations and the broader implications of the study, for in carefully articulating what this unit accounts for in the lives of the speakers it delineates, one can also articulate what it does not account for. It is not enough to describe a speech community as an isolated unit, for no community is isolable; the description of a speech community is most importantly an account of that community's linguistic place in the wider society. An account of a speech community, then, will optimally account for the articulation between the internal dynamics of the speech community and its relation to other localities (Eckert, 2000: 33-34).

However, defining the ideological and political boundaries of a community can turn out to be more problematic than anticipated. Since communities are not isolated units, they are not merely a group of people who share an identity and some social practices. Community members form a social network, and within these networks we will find individuals at the core of the group and then others at the margins who may have ties with other networks. Therefore, it is impossible to define the boundaries of social networks since marginal members will hold stronger or weaker ties with members of other communities. Instead, they are social groups that are interrelated to other communities and the way in which they construct meaning will necessarily be determined by their position in a wider social context. Because of these external links, community boundaries are fluid and difficult to pin down. Similarly, given the high level of social mobility, it is difficult nowadays to confine people to just one speech community. In their everyday lives they move between different communities – e.g. work colleagues, friends, family, and so on – and in doing so they arguably change their language style accordingly (Eckert, 2000: 34). In order to develop a fuller understanding of the factors impinging upon the Sunderland identity, and the speech

community as a factor in this, the next section looks at how Sunderland people define their own community.

4.1.4 Self-definitions of the Sunderland speech community

Asking Sunderland people to define the limits of their community would allow me to ascertain whether the locals have accepted this alteration of the political boundaries and, therefore, if they now regard Washington, Hetton, Houghton and Fence Houses people as part of the community and as contributors to the local construction of meaning, or whether, by contrast, they do not identify with the current layout of the political boundaries. What was found was that informants often felt conflicted over where the borders should be drawn; while they knew that places like Washington now fell within the political boundaries, they felt uncomfortable in identifying those places as part of the community. A significant number of informants felt the border should be drawn through the middle of Washington, and the most common reasons given for this were football allegiances, postcode, dialect and distance from either Newcastle or Sunderland.

In question 17 of the IdQ the Sunderland informants were provided with a map of the region (figure 4.1 below) and were asked to draw a line around what they considered to be the Geordie and the Mackem territories – the former referring to the rival Tyneside community and the latter to the Sunderland one. Initially, this question was intended to ascertain where Sunderland people thought the linguistic boundary between the two communities lay. Given that the identity questionnaire was designed to elicit local attitudes towards regional varieties, especially Sunderland and Tyneside English, it seemed pertinent to ask the participants to state where those varieties were used.⁶ Nevertheless, since different factors were bound to come together in the definition of the local identity, not only language, in the end it was left unspecified in order to allow the informants to give some consideration to the question. Later in the interview they were asked to explain what factors they had taken into account when drawing their line.

⁶ See Preston (2002) for a discussion on the importance of exploring people's mental maps of different regional varieties. As he indicates people from different areas are bound to hold different mental maps of, and different attitudes to, regional varieties given that these are largely determined by the social constructs and ideologies in place in each community.

17. In the map of the North-east you have below, draw a line where you would place the boundary that separates the areas where Geordies and Mackems live.

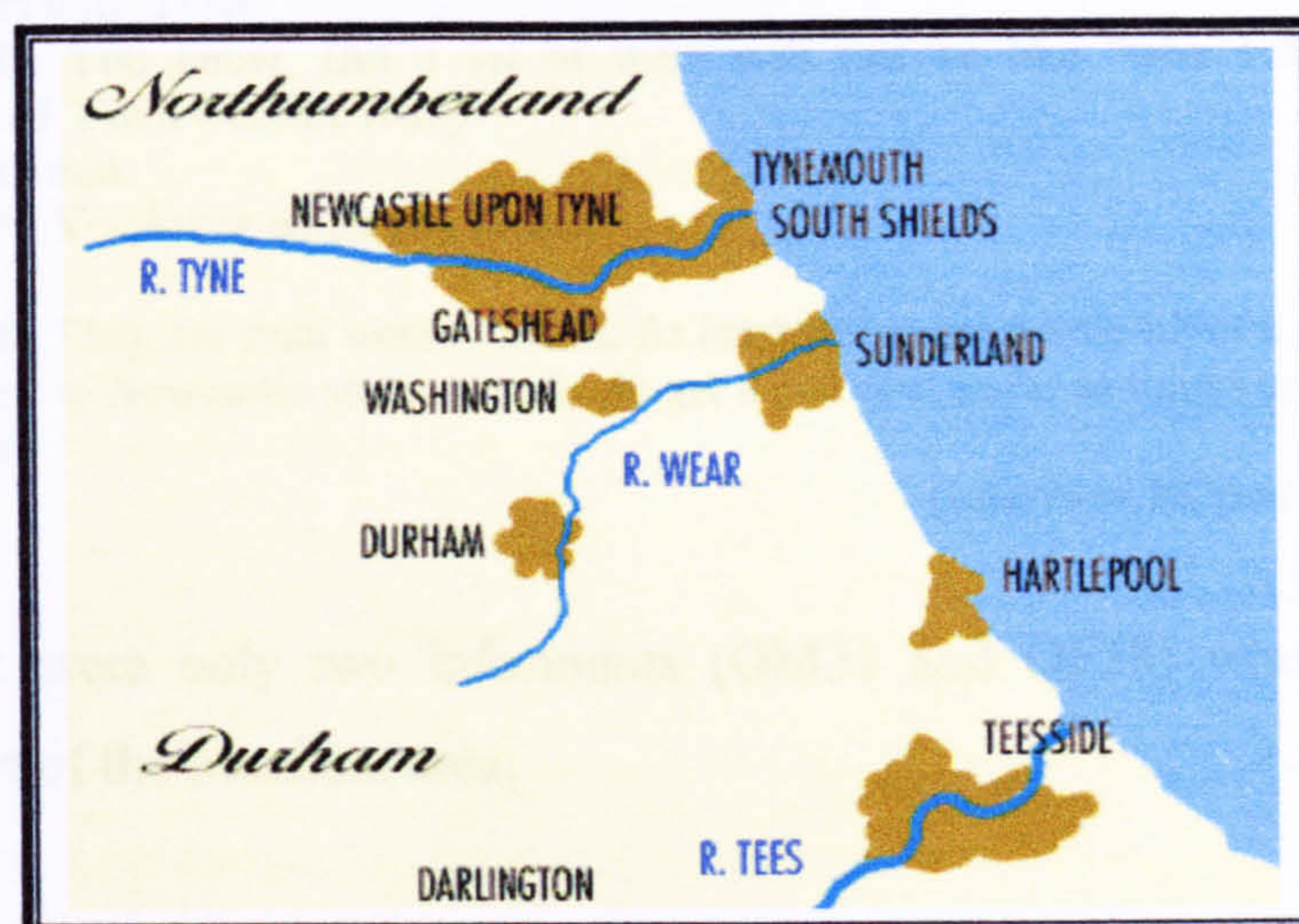


Figure 4.1: Extract from the Sunderland Identity Questionnaire: Question 17

Two thirds of the informants agreed that the Geordie territory covers Newcastle, Gateshead, Tynemouth and South Shields. Of the remaining ten, three males stated that Geordies are only those who live in Newcastle and Gateshead, and one female informant (OF13) stated that Geordies come exclusively from Newcastle. Two other people (MF23, YM43) regarded Gateshead as a mixture of Geordies and Mackems and yet another one (YM34) thought that, although officially Gateshead people are not Geordies, half of them would be against Geordies and half would say they are Geordies. He refers to Gateshead as ‘Newcastle’s horrible little brother’:⁷

<YM34> A lot of people from Gateshead I think that.. officially they are not Geordies.

<L> Right.

<YM34> But I think a lot of people, ye- yet again you’ll probablys be a half-half. There’ll be a lot of people who are against Newcastle because the- they’re even worse than us.

⁷ Whilst, in spite of being part of Tyneside, Gateshead people may fail to identify with Newcastle, it would be interesting to see what impact the creation of the Newcastle-Gateshead brand in 2000 by tourism professionals has locally. This initiative aims at ‘promoting it [Newcastle-Gateshead] nationally and internationally as a place at the forefront of innovative culture-led regeneration and a world-class place to live, learn, work and visit’ (*Visit Newcastle-Gateshead website 2007*), and could lead to a reduction of the gap between the two communities.

<L> Yeah.
 <YM34> They are like Newcastle's horrible little brother, you know.
 <L> Yes.
 <YM34> Em em like whenever you he- eh eh they'll be like-- half of them will be like "Newcastle I'm not a Geordie, you've got nee chance I'm from Gateshead me"
 <L> Mm mm. Yeah.
 <YM34> You know. But a lot of them will just be like "why I'm only from Gateshead. I'm a Geordie really".
 <L> Mm mm.
 <YM34> You know when you're not.
 [...]
 <YM34> They are even worse than us. At least we've got a little bit of a gap, they are right next to Newcastle so they really do get a bad deal as far as things are concerned, you know.

(Interview 18, part 2 (10:50 ff))

Finally, there were only two informants (OM31 and OF38) who regarded South Shields as part of the Mackem area:

<OM31> People from South Shields tend to be more Sunderland than Newcastle.
 (Interview 16 (78:24))

As regards defining the Sunderland area, the main point of disagreement concerned Washington. Whilst fifteen people located Washington as part of the Mackem territory, some of them acknowledged that they had only aligned it with Sunderland because officially it is part of it, like informant OM10:

<L> What about Washington?
 <OM10> No, they are not Mackems. Since them-- They've got to be accepted now, because politicians changed the boundaries. So if you look out loosely Washington people now are Mackems because they live in Sunderland.
 <L> Mm-mm.
 <OM10> My definition of a 'Mackem' is somebody born and bred in what was Sunderland for hundreds of years: Bishop Wearmouth, Monkwearmouth.
 <L> Yeah. Uh huh.
 <OM10> I say the same about Newcastle.
 <L> Yeah.
 <OM10> You've got to be born in Newcastle to be a Geordie.

(Interview 5 (60:27 – 60:57))

Thus, although they had drawn the political boundary so that Washington remained in the Mackem territory, many explained in the interview that, as regards identity, this locality is divided. Informant YM34, for example, addressed Washington's identity crisis:

<L> So Washington would be
 <YM34> They are from Sunderland, people from Washington. Even though p-

<L> Officially, they'll hav- they are from Sunderland. How do you think they define themselves?
 <YM34> Offic- ... They don't know where they are. they haven't got a clue where they are.
 <L> Right.
 <YM34> They think that-- they think they're Geordies but they're not. They are in Sunderland.
 <L> Right. Mm mm
 <YM34> You know. People from Washington haven't got a clue were they're from. You know.
 <L> Do you agree with that?
 <YF35> I really couldn't tell you cos I don't know me way around.
 <L> @
 <YM34> Em people from Washington have got a bit of an identity crisis. You know.
 (Interview 18, part 2 (10:11 – 10:38))

Informant MF32 did not include Washington in the Mackem area on the map. In the interview, however, she explained that, although it is officially part of Sunderland, Washington people do not like to think of themselves as Sunderland people and she referred to them as 'Geordie rejects':

<MF32> It is part of Sunderland.
 <YM33> It's part of Sunderland [--].
 <MF32> But they don't
 <L> Mm yeah officially but
 <MF32> They don't like to think they are though.
 <YM33> No, they think--they like to think they're like private on their own.
 <MF32> Yeah, or they are like Geordies [--]. We call them Geordie rejects.
 <L> Right.
 <MF32> That's an ins- Like if they start being nasty or saying anything. I just say well it's not my fault you live in the town (¿that?) was created for Geordie re-ject".
 [...]
 <MF32> And they're not like, they wouldn't class themselves as Geordies yet some do don't they?
 (Interview 17 (75:15-75:35 / 75:54-75:58))

Eleven informants pointed out that Washington is half Mackem and half Geordie, and that the line, therefore, needed to run half way through it in order to mark the divide within it. Most of them acknowledged that, officially, Washington is part of the City of Sunderland, yet pointed out that many Washington people do not class themselves as being from Sunderland but from Newcastle. Many informants claimed that Washington people's dialect is closer to that of Tyneside:

<L> Do you think that people from Washington feel they are from Sunderland? Or is it -- is it?
 <MF04> No, I think a lot of people in Washington speak Geordie.
 (Interview 2 (66:29 – 66:37))

<OM07> Are you including S- Washington in Sunderland? Are you? Or. Because I mean they're all completely different from Sunderland they've got like. The sound's like to me a Tyneside accent.

(Interview 4, part 2 (20:53 – 21:02))

<OM12> But Washington

<L> Yeah.

<OM12> is a kind of new creation which is a-- a-- a mixture of quite a lot of people within a

<L> Yeah.

<OM12> So that's why you'd see the biggest change.

<L> Yeah.

<OM12> And they certainly at times sound very Tyneside.

<L> Yeah.

<OM12> Because they are quite close to Gateshead.

(Interview 6, part 2 (40:02 40:19))

The last extract seems to allude to the fact that Washington became a 'new town' in 1964. Consequently, given that many of its inhabitants would have originally moved there from localities nearby, we can expect that some of these would have come from Newcastle. This would explain why some class themselves as 'Geordies'.

Some of the informants seemed to think that the divide in Washington was the result of opposing football allegiances: Some support Newcastle United, which turns them into Geordies, and others support Sunderland F. C. and are therefore Mackems. Informant YF06, for example, believed that people in the southern part of Washington would class themselves as living in Sunderland despite the fact that their postcode is NE rather than SR, which is the Sunderland one:

<YF06> There's villages in Washington like the ones from this end

<L> Yeah.

<YF06> like eh Fatfield and Rickleton who are Sunderland supporters and they class themselves as living in Sunderland not in Newcastle.

<L> Right.

<YF06> Even though their postcode is N-E whatever.

(Interview 3 (52:10 – 52:22))

Finally, four informants considered Durham city as part of the Mackem area and a further three as at least half Mackem.

The uncertainty over Washington could be a consequence of the fact that, being a new town, its population at first would have consisted of people from either Newcastle, Sunderland or other nearby localities. As regards identity, its population is still divided and is thus regarded as a mixture of Geordies and Mackems. Their dialect seems to be perceived as being different: closer to TE than Sunde. As well as football

and dialect, there seemed to be yet another factor coming into play here: self-perception. Many informants referred to the fact that Washington people often refuse to class themselves as living in Sunderland. So, belonging to the community depended not just upon being *perceived* as part of it, but also upon *wanting* to belong to it. Consequently, membership of the Sunderland community seemed subject to Washington people's acceptance of certain local symbols.

Very much in line with some of the definitions of *community* and *speech community* that have been discussed throughout this section (e.g. Corder's in p. 88) the social group's perception and ideology seems to be essential in defining a community as they know what symbols or social practices are salient for their collective construction of meaning. Whilst question 17 in the IdQ asked informants to focus on their community as a social unit which needed to be differentiated from the allegedly 'dominant' North-eastern community, i.e. Geordies, the next section analyses the answers provided in some of the other sixteen questions included in this questionnaire with the intention of deconstructing the Sunderland community to expose the different ways in which Sunderland people may identify with the local community.

Section 4.2 will look at the qualitative data recorded both in the IdQ and the interviews, and will explore general attitudes and responses so as to provide a global picture of how Sunderland people explain their community and their relation towards, and perception of, Sunderland. Section 4.3 will discuss the results obtained in the Identification Score Index which was implemented to measure the strength of the Sunderland informants' local affiliation. Finally, section 4.4 will attempt to collate the findings of sections 4.2 and 4.3 and emphasise the importance of acknowledging variation in how different Sunderland people demonstrated their identification with, and/or membership of, the local community.

4.2 DECONSTRUCTING THE SUNDERLAND IDENTITY

The close proximity of Sunderland and Newcastle perhaps made it inevitable that the two would develop a strong rivalry. To the outsider, there often seems little difference between the two communities – a point reinforced by the similarity of their two bridges, which both communities value as strong symbols of their local identity but which, to the outsider, bear striking resemblances to each other (see pictures 4.1 and

4.2). Depending on who is telling the story, it seems both communities will claim that the other copied the design:

[t]he problem was it [Sunderland] always suffered from Newcastle. [...] Why, they'll tell you, Newcastle has even pinched the design of their wonderful bridge – a beautiful orange and white iron bow, once reckoned the biggest in the world. The feeling that somehow they always deserved better than they got is still strong in Sunderland today, and who can say it is wrong? (*The Guardian*, September 1979).

The robustness of the term *Geordie*, and its associated meanings, is succinctly articulated in the symbolism of the bridges.⁸ To the native of Sunderland, it seems their identity, like their bridge, is in danger of being appropriated by their more dominant Tyneside neighbours. From the data collected, it seems that the Sunderland community has relatively recently developed a site of resistance to what they often appear to perceive as the overpowering *Geordie* label. With the term *Mackem*, the Wearside community appears to be engaged in a process of articulating an alternative identity.



Picture 4.1: Wearmouth Bridge⁹

⁸ Sunderland's original Wearmouth Bridge was built in 1796 and, at the time, was the largest iron bridge in the world and an important symbol of the industrial nature of the city. It was refurbished in the 1920s but, by the time of its completion, Newcastle's Tyne Bridge had already opened in 1928. For more information, see:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/insideout/northeast/series3/tyne_bridge_northeasthistory.shtml

http://www.wearsideonline.com/Sunderland_Wearmouth_Bridge.html

⁹ Image from *Wikipedia Commons*: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Wearmouth_bridge.jpg



Picture 4.2: The Tyne bridge

There are five subsections that follow which analyse and discuss the informants' responses to questions on the IdQ that deal with perceptions of identity labels, the city, regional rivalries, social practices and attitudes to the local dialect. The first of these subsections looks at the informants' usage and understanding of the term *Mackem*.

4.2.1 Popular labels applied to Sunderland people

As some of the informants argued in relation to Washington people when trying to delimit the boundaries of the City of Sunderland (section 4.1.3), whether someone is a Mackem or not is often regarded as dependant on what football team they support. Today, the media tend to use the term *Mackem* mainly in connection with football to refer to the Sunderland A.F.C. team and its fans. This may have been one of the factors contributing to the progressive acceptance of the term as a label of the local identity; adherence to the local team could arguably, thus, be regarded as another sign of local affiliation. In question 10 (What football team do you mainly support? Who is its main rival?), 22 of the 30 informants claimed that they supported the local football team. Only a few of these regularly went to the local matches in the Stadium of Light or watched them on television. However, the fact that people are ready to claim that

they support the local team, if need be, may suggest that they want to identify with their local community.

4.2.1.1 THE TERM *MACKEM*

The etymology of this term continues to be rather uncertain. What is certain is that *Mackem* derives from the traditional Durham/Sunderland pronunciation of the words *make* and *take*, which is [mak] and [tak] respectively (Beal 1999: 45). However, whilst some believe that the term was created by Geordie football fans to insult their Sunderland rivals, another popular story holds that the term arose in times of the shipyards in Wearside, when Sunderland workers would *mak* the ships and then others would *tak 'em* away – hence ‘Mackems’:

One story states that during World War II shipyard workers from Wearside were asked to help out building ships on the Tyne (Newcastle), probably due to their vast experience in the shipbuilding trade. This was not well met by the local Geordies who viewed it as taking work away from local people, thus the Wearside workers were making the ships and taking away jobs from Tyneside folk - "Mak'em and Tak'em". Thus the term "Mackem" was born and used to insult Wearside shipyard workers.

[\(http://www.virtualtourist.com/m/2587d/4a601/\)](http://www.virtualtourist.com/m/2587d/4a601/)

It is also unclear *when* the label appeared. Informant YM34 stated that his father had explained that the term used to be applied exclusively to shipyard workers:

<YM34> There's a big split rivalry in this. And I was talking my dad about it the other day and my dad used to .. work on ships,

<L> Mm-hm.

<YM34> used to go around the world

<L> Yeah.

<YM34> and of course there was many different people on the ships but they were all from this region,

<L> Yeah.

<YM34> might have been from Middlesbrough, might have been from Newcastle.

<L> Mm-hm.

<YM34> It might have been from Northumberland, Blyth [XX] stuff like that. It might have been from Sunderland.

<L> Mm-hm.

<YM34> But when they were off the ship, they were all Geordies.

<L> Yeah.

<YM34> They were in the sixties.

<L> Yeah.

<YM34> You didn't—you-- yo- my dad said "I never h- never remember thinking "I'm not a Geordie, I'm from Sunderland".

<L> Mm-hm

<YM34> We were just a Geordie.

<L> Yeah.

<YM34> You know. But you know if you were in your region, you were from Sunderland, but he said, the word *Mackem* didn't even exist. People that worked in the shipyards were Mackems.

<L> Mm-hm.

<YM34> People that worked-- If you worked in the Sunderland shipyard, you were a Mackem.

<L> Yeah.

<YM34> Weren't-- If you worked in a butcher's in Sunderland, you weren't a Mackem.

<L> Mm-hm.

<YM34> It's just if you worked in the shipyards.

<L> Right.

<YM34> I'm not a Mackem.

(Interview 18, part 2 (4:26 - 5:30))

This suggestion that *Mackem* is a label derived from a person's occupation is significant, since Wales (2006: 134) argues that the *Geordie* label has a similar occupational etymology (apparently originating in 19th-century North-eastern songs, and referring to miners). Nevertheless, given the pejorative connotations of the term *Mackem*, Wales would suggest that its coinage probably originated from outside the community, since: '[o]utsider nicknames for groups or regional communities are common and often pejorative' (2006: 134).

YM34's was not the only comment that specifically stated that Sunderland people used to refer to themselves as 'Geordies' in the 1960s. Some people in the oldest age group still felt more strongly attached to County Durham and did not really accept the new relocation of the City of Sunderland as part of Tyne and Wear. For instance, when asked whether the term *Mackem* was offensive, informant OM27, a sixty-nine-year-old ex-miner born in Houghton-le-Spring, which is now part of the City of Sunderland, produced the following answer:

I'm not bothered because in my opinion everyone born in the county of Durham is a Geordie. (OM27 – IdQ 16)

Very much in line with YM34's explanation above, informant MM14, whose father had worked in the shipyards, referred to the use of the term *Mackem* as a derogatory term by Geordies as early as the 1960s:

<MM14> I wouldn't consider myself a Geordie.

<L> Uh-huh.

<MM14> But, er, *Mackem* seems as always like a pejorative term.

<L> Yeah.

<MM14> So, er, imposed on us and

<L> Yeah.

<MM14> for some reason people are using it.

<L> Do people use it? [--]
 <MM14> Yeah, yeah. Well in the Sunderland Echo for example.
 <L> Uh-huh.
 <MM14> Er, any reference to Sunderland F. C., 'Mackem this and Mackem that'. So
 <L> Yeah.
 <MM14> it's certainly been adopted and localised and nativised as a, as a term.
 <L> But do you think it's offensive?
 <MM14> I think originally it was offensive.
 <L> Uh-huh.
 <MM14> In the er so like when my father was starting work in the mid-sixties and early seventies.
 <L> Yeah.
 <MM14> and he had a lot of contact with Tyneside workers, they would refer to 'Mackems'.
 <L> Uh-huh.
 <MM14> And whenever they mentioned the word *Mackem*, that was never in a good light.
 <L> Right.
 <MM14> But by the time I was in working age or going to university, *Mackem* was just a word that we would use.
 <L> Uh-huh.
 <MM14> But curiously, er, for some other research I'm doing I went through all of the papers from 1982. I did four months worth of research in the early part of this year.
 <L> Yeah.
 <MM/14> And in 1982 nowhere is the word *Mackem* mentioned.
 <L> Right.
 <MM14> in those papers. And in fact people are referring to themselves as 'Geordies' in the letters to the editor and stuff.

(Interview 7 (74:20-75:51))

However, apart from this kind of personal testimony, there is not much written evidence for when the term started to be used. In 2006 the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in collaboration with the BBC, launched an appeal to the public asking them to contribute to the identification of the earliest written records of words that were being considered for inclusion in an up-to-date edition of the OED. This appeal was broadcast in the BBC2 programme *Balderdash & Piffle* in January, February and April 2006, and, as a result, a list of new entries was added in the new edition of the dictionary.¹⁰ One of the words they aimed to incorporate was precisely the term *Mackem*. As the dictionary entry below shows (figure 4.2), the earliest attested record found dates back to 1980 in one of the issues of the *Magpie* (a Geordie football fanzine).

Whatever its origin, whether the term *Mackem* started off as a derogatory label used to refer to Sunderland shipyard workers or not, nowadays it seems to have become associated mainly – yet not exclusively – with supporters of Sunderland AFC.

¹⁰ OED Wordhunt: <http://www.oed.com/bbcwords/>

In time, this term seems have become slightly more accepted in Sunderland as a label for their identity, a term that would constitute the antithesis of the term *Geordie*.

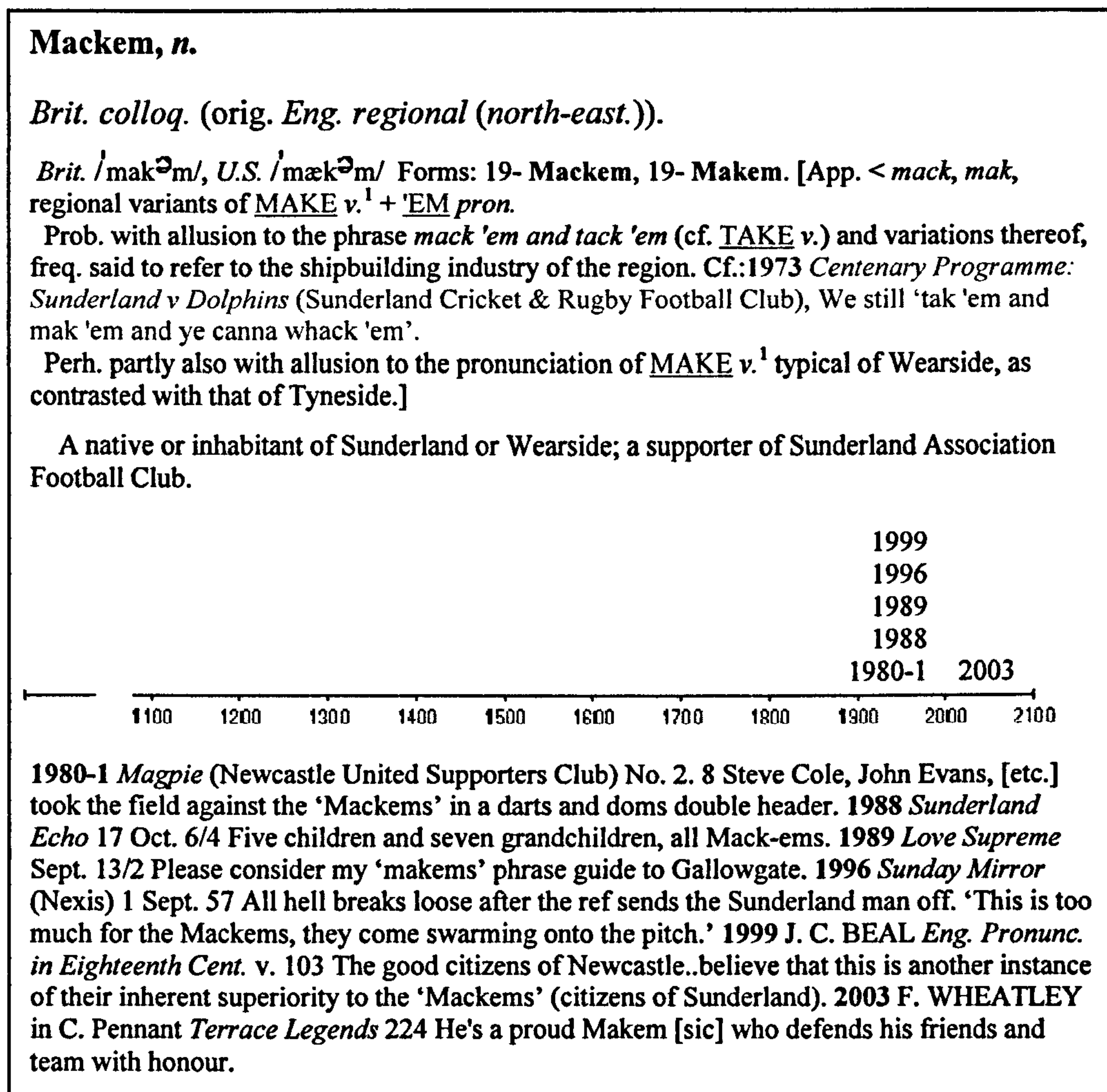


Figure 4.2: OED entry for the word *Mackem*

Question 16 of the IdQ (Do you find it offensive to be called 'Mackem'? Why?) was intended to elicit people's attitudes towards this label in the hope of ascertaining its acceptability locally. Only seven of the thirty informants felt the term was offensive. The main reason given was that the word had been invented by Geordies who only use it with the intention to insult or offend Sunderland people. YF36 even explained that the label is only used by Geordies; Durham people would not use this label:

<YF36> We're referred to by people from Newcastle as 'Mackems'
<L> Uh-huh

<YF36> and there's only really -- em. People from Newcastle use that word. People from Durham don't refer to people from Sunderland as 'Mackems'.

(Interview 19 – 64:56 - 65:08)

The rest of the sample did not find the term particularly offensive. However, MF26 and MM28 did point out that this depended on *how* the term was used and, most importantly, *who* used it. They both seemed to suggest that the term, whatever its origin and despite its originally derogatory connotations, may have filtered through the Sunderland community little by little and as a result it could have become accepted at least by some as a label for their identity:

<MF26> It depends who's said it. It's like if we were-- I would say somebody was a thick Geordie and I mean that derogatory. But they would be "I'm a Geordie, great!" and vice-versa, I mean, that's-- that's what they do to us. But most people, I think, when they say it mean it as a derogatory thing, whereas people from Sunderland, a lot of them are quite proud that they *are* Mackems and they call themselves 'Mackems'. Because if somebody-- if you a- away, say if you're in London and somebody says "oh you are a Geordie", I'm not a bloody Geordie, I'm a Mackem. So you'll get that but I think a lot of the time when people-- ou- outsiders call people from Sunderland 'a Mackem', they mean it as in a derogatory term

(Interview 13 – 60:25 – 61:07)

<MM28> People from within Sunderland of our generation and younger identify with it.

<MM29> Yeah.

<MM28> Em Newcastle people think they made it up as an offensive word to us.

<L> Uh-huh.

<MM28> So the- they would use it as an offensive word.

<L> Yeah.

<MM28> em to us but we--but that's like an English person calling somebody from France 'frog'.

<L> Right.

<MM29> Yeah.

<MM28> From the point of view of the outsider it might be offensive to call me a 'Mackem'.

<MM29> Yeah.

<L> Mm-hm.

<MM28> but I would not take offence at it.

<L> Right.

<MM28> So.

<MM29> Yeah, I thin-

<MM28> Withi- within Sunderland it's not an offensive word.

(Interview 15, part 2 – 7:38 – 8:13)

The belief that the term *Mackem* started to be applied to Sunderland people by Geordie football fans was quite widespread amongst my informants. The majority concurred that it was historically a derogatory term used by Geordies to refer to Sunderland people, which would explain why some Sunderland people do not like this label and even found it offensive.

4.2.1.2 LABELS USED BY THE INFORMANTS TO DEFINE THEMSELVES

In general, then, views towards the term *Mackem* are divided. It is not a term that is as widely accepted by the Sunderland community as *Geordie* is amongst the Tyneside community. *Geordie* is a term with national recognition. By contrast, *Mackem* is very much confined to the North-east region: arguably, not many people outside this region would know what *Mackem* means or what its identity connotations are unless they are interested in football, since the term is probably becoming more widely known due to its widespread media application to Sunderland A.F.C. supporters. Question 1 in the IdQ (Do you consider yourself a Mackem, a Geordie or neither of them?) looked into this issue by asking people how they would class themselves. Unsurprisingly, everyone who in question 16 stated that the term *Mackem* is offensive¹¹ chose to define themselves mostly as being *from* Sunderland – or Houghton, where appropriate. Only YF36 classed herself as a ‘Wearsider’ in her answer to question 16. In the interview, when given the chance to expand on why she did not call herself ‘Mackem’, MF32 explained that only people who used to work in the shipyards are Mackems:

<MF32> I’m not because I didn’t work on-- I didn’t work in the shipyard because that’s where the term comes from.

<L> Right.

<MF32> “Mak ‘em and tak ‘em”. They make them in the river

<L> Yeah.

<MF32> and they take them up the river into the sea.

<L> Mm-hm.

<MF32> So forty year ago it probably wasn’t. It was like “oh, he’s a Mackem” meaning “oh, he works in the-- in the shipyard”.

<L> Yeah.

<YM33> Hm.

<MF32> And they have just adopted it, and it’s seen as a-- I would say some people don’t, but I would say generally it’s a derogatory term.

(Interview 17 (71:50 - 72:16))

Table 4.1 presents a summary of responses to questions 1 and 16.

¹¹ They were YF36, YM05, MF32, MM20, OF13, OF37 and OF38

		From Sunderland (or Houghton)	Mackem	Mackem / Wearsider	Wearsider	Geordie
Mackem = Offensive	Y	YF36, YF06 YM05				
	MA	MF32 MM20				
	O	OF13, OF37, OF38				
Mackem = Not offensive	Y	YM33, YM34 (YM43)	YF01, YF09, YF35 YM02			
	MA	MF04, MF26, MF39 MM03, MM14	MF23 MM28	MM19		
	O	OM12	OF08 OM31, OM10	OM07	OF17	OM27

Table 4.1: Tabulated responses to IdQ question 1

Amongst those who did not find the term particularly offensive, various attitudes can be identified.

- (i) First of all, there was a group of eight speakers¹² – four young, two middle-aged and two older speakers – who just classed themselves as ‘Mackems’ without questioning the term at all. Unfortunately, they just accepted it without adding any further explanations. It could be argued that they merely chose this option because it was the only one that could be more closely associated to Sunderland or that connoted ‘being from Sunderland’, and maybe not so much because it really defined their identity or their attachment to the local community. Only the middle-aged male, MM28, justified his answer to the question by saying the he was a ‘Mackem – not even English/British – just Mackem’ (MM28 – IdQ 16). This adoption of the term as a nationality also appeared in his ‘About You’ form where he defined his ethnic group as ‘white (Mackem)’.
- (ii) MF39, MM03, MM14 and OM10 also answered in the questionnaire that they were Mackems. However, in the interview they made it clear that they did not identify with the term, but, since they did not find it offensive, they merely accepted it as a term used to refer to Sunderland people. For example:

¹² They were YF01, YF09, YF35, YM02, MF23, MM28, OF08 and OM31.

<MF39> I put down I was a Mackem.
 <MF40> You see, I hate 'Mackem'.
 <MF39> I hate it and I wouldn't use it
 <L> So if you didn't use that word, what would you say?
 <MF39> I'd probably say that I was from Sunderland but I wouldn't actually say that-- I wouldn't give myself a title. I think like it's a new thing that's come in.
 <L> Mm-hm
 <MF40> Yeah because I didn't know what it meant, but they say it's because we say "Mak 'em" and "tak 'em".
 <MF39> "Mak 'em" and "tak 'em".
 <MF40> But I don't know anyone who says that.
 [...]

<MF39> You do hear it.
 <MF40> Uh-huh.
 <MF39> But I wou- I would never say it.
 <MF40> Uh-huh.
 <MF39> I'd say I was a Mackem but not-- not as in an identity.

(Interview 21 (79:01 - 79:48))

It seems that the gradual growth in popularity and application of the label has resulted in some informants accepting it as a term loosely synonymous with 'from Sunderland', even though they may not regard it as an identity label. MM14 and OM10 seemed to suggest this when trying to explain why they had defined themselves as 'Mackems':

<MM14> I would consider myself a 'Mackem'. That's only because that choice has been thrust on us. I wouldn't consider myself a Geordie.
 <L> Uh-huh.
 <MM14> But, er, 'Mackem' seems as always like a pejorative term.
 <L> Yeah.
 <MM14> So, er, imposed on us and
 <L> Yeah.
 <MM14> for some reason people are using it.
 <L> Do people use it? [--]
 <MM14> Yeah, yeah. Well in the Sunderland Echo for example.

(Interview 7 (74:20 – 74:37))

<OM10> Well I've got here 'Mackem' because I was born and bred on Sunderland, but, but it's-- it's a modern thing that's coming through football. Sunderland people have always called 'Mackems' right?
 <L> Yeah.
 <OM10> but it was very rarely used. I mean I can't now remember anybody saying to me "you're a--" All the time I was at sea, nobody ever said to me "hey, are you a Mackem?
 <L> Mm-hm.
 <OM10> I just came from Sunderland and in lots of cases people said "you're a Geordie". But Geordies to them is straight from Leeds to—
 <L> Yeah. @.
 <OM10> to [anywhere that the accent give it up.?] Eh.and it-- I don't know it's a media hype that-- that-- that Mackem and Mackem and Mackem and-- and
 <L> Yeah.
 <OM/10> I'm just a Mackem. I mean my son's-- eh my son's e-mail address is 'Mackem'.

(Interview 5 (57:43 – 58:30))

- (iii) In the third place, two males (MM19 and OM07) defined themselves either as ‘Wearsiders’ or ‘Mackems’ – both terms being regarded as equally acceptable when defining themselves. In spite of having started as a derogatory term, to some extent, it appears to have become a label with which some identify and which is interchangeable with Wearsider.
- (iv) Finally, five informants – YM33, YM34, MF04, MF26 and OM12 – answered question 1 saying that they were neither a Mackem nor a Geordie. Like those who considered *Mackem* an offensive term, these did not seem to relate to the term at all, and also like them, preferred to say that they were *from* Sunderland. The only difference between the two groups therefore was that whereas for the former *Mackem* was offensive, the latter did not find the label offensive probably because they were indifferent to it.

Mackem, therefore, appears to fulfil the function of positioning the Sunderland community in opposition to the Geordie community. Following Moore (2005), this might be an example of the tendency for originally derogatory labels to be reclaimed and adopted by those to whom they are referring as a badge of pride and shared identity. Another example that could be mentioned is the label *queer*, originally used in a derogatory way to refer to homosexual people, but now frequently used by members of this community as a strategy to reflect solidarity between themselves. Thus, whether these labels are meant as an insult will depend on who is using them and in what context. Generally, they will be accepted if they are used by people who belong to these communities, but if they come from outsiders, they may be considered offensive.¹³ This is precisely the point that MF26 made during the interview:

<L> So *Mackem* would be an offensive term.. for you well you know
 <OM25> Well no not anymore I don't think. I--I think it started off that way but eh I-- I think it's become em em much more attached to the football team than
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF26> It depends who said it. It's like
 <OM25> anything else.
 <MF26> if we were.. I would say somebody was a thick Geordie
 <OM25> Yeah.
 <MF26> and I mean that derogatory.
 <L> Yeah.

¹³ See Moore (2005 - available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/yourvoice/sticksandstones.shtml>) for a discussion on naming practices.

<MF26> But they would be “I’m a Geordie great” and vice-versa. I mean tha-that’s what they do to us.

<OM25> Yeah yeah.

<L> Yeah.

<MF26> But most people I think when they say it

<L> Yeah.

<MF26> mean it as a derogatory thing whereas people from Sunderland

<L> Yeah.

<MF26> a lot of them are quite proud that they are Mackems and they’ll call themselves Mackems.

<L> Uh-huh.

<MF26> Because if somebody--if you’re a-away say if you’re in London and somebody says “oh you’re a Geordie”.

<L> Yeah.

<MF26> I’m not a bloody Geordie I’m a Mackem.

<L> Uh-huh.

<MF26> So you’ll get that but I think a lot of the time when people ou-outsiders call people from Sunderland ‘a Mackem’ they mean it as in a derogatory term.

(Interview 13 (60:13 – 61:07))

Given that 96% of the population sample rejected the term *Geordie*, it is now timely to explore their attitudes to both the cities of Newcastle and Sunderland. What will be seen is that there is a parallel belief that Newcastle, like the term *Geordie*, is generally more favourably viewed by those outside the North-east.

4.2.2 Attitudes towards Sunderland and Newcastle

Being the most developed city in the region, Newcastle is regarded as the capital of North-east England (Beal 1999b:34). The closest big city to the north of Newcastle is Edinburgh and the closest one to the south is Leeds. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that the proximity of this urban centre has in some ways overshadowed the city of Sunderland, which is only about 15 miles to the south of Newcastle. Although Sunderland was granted city status in 1992 and this considerably boosted pride in the city (Beal 2000a: 369), as will be seen in the responses from informants, Sunderland people often feel that their city is the less favoured one and that more money is invested in Newcastle, which receives all the latest improvements.

Questions 11 and 12 asked the informants about their opinions of Sunderland and whether, in their opinion, Newcastle is generally more favoured than Sunderland and, as a result, gets the best facilities. The following two responses to question 12, and the extract from one of the interviews, indicate the views of three male informants *vis-à-vis* Newcastle, and reflect negative feelings towards this neighbouring city:

Newcastle is more cosmopolitan and seems to get more business opportunities than Sunderland. Sunderland is clearly the poorer relative. (MM14 – IdQ: qu. 12)

[Newcastle] historically is more important than Sunderland. It has a bigger and better city centre. It [is] seen as the capital of the north. Newcastle is more fashionable than Sunderland, we seem to be the second best on everything including football (OM07 – IdQ: qu. 12 – aged 51)

<MM28> But unfortunately the majority of people outside of the North-east, particularly in the south, they don't think there's anything more in the North-east than Newcastle.

<MM29> Yeah, yeah that's right.

<L> Mm-hm. That true.

<MM28> And that's down to f- that's probably down to the fact that Newcastle manages to get everything from the south,

<L> Uh-huh.

<MM28> like, government allocated money to Newcastle.

<MM29> Yeah.

<L> Yeah.

<MM28> Which is another reason for hating them.

(Interview 15, part 2 (15:42 - 16:01))

In connection to this question, OM10 commented in the interview that even the *One North-east* committee tends to favour Newcastle. This is a regional development agency whose function since 1999 has been to promote and support the development of the North-eastern region – including its businesses, people and environment.¹⁴ OM10 explained that, because most of its members are Geordies and none from Sunderland, the Geordie representatives generally manage to direct most of the money towards investments in Newcastle (Interview 5 (67:27 – 69:08)).

Another comment made by one of the middle-aged male informants (MM28) suggested that Newcastle not only receives most of the money invested in the North-east, but also steals from Sunderland:

<MM28> Newcastle, they are known as 'Magpies' because they steal stuff.

<L> @ OK.

<MM28> They have, they have stolen lots of things from Sunderland.

<L> Uh-huh.

<MM28> Right? That's one of the reasons I hate them.¹⁵

(Interview 15 (72:03ff))

These comments reveal clear feelings of dislike and resentment; feelings that perhaps help to mould a local identity that often strongly opposes Geordies and their city.

¹⁴ *One North-east*: <http://www.onenortheast.co.uk/page/onene/index.cfm>

¹⁵ It must be noted here that Newcastle United players are popularly called 'Magpies' due to the fact that their black and white striped shirt reminds of the thieving black and white bird and the magpie appears on the club crest.

Nonetheless, an underlying feeling of inferiority also seems to pervade these assertions. The informants appear to see Sunderland not only as the 'poorer relative' but also as 'the second best' when compared to Newcastle.

Interestingly, mixed feelings were elicited when informants were asked about their attitudes towards Sunderland. Whilst some of the informants clearly demonstrated feelings of pride towards their city and viewed the process of development and improvement the city has undergone in the last few years in a positive light (cf. answers (i) and (ii) below), others, in spite of Sunderland's development, provided negative views of Sunderland and showed a lack of pride towards it, which may well provide evidence of an 'inferiority complex' (see comments (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi), below).

- (i) Very proud of it, love it, it is the biggest and most important city in North East. (MM28)
- (ii) It is the most progressive city in the Northeast at the moment (YF36 – IdQ 11).
- (iii) Uninspiring, small minded. (MF40 – IdQ 11)⁸
- (iv) No expectations. That way, we'll never be disappointed. Characterises Sunderland folks, I think. Generally shows a lack of civil vision backed by inferior planning. (OM25 – IdQ 11)¹⁶
- (v) Characterless (MF39 – IdQ 11)
- (vi) An industrial town. There have been a lot of recent changes. I don't think it will ever be a beautiful city. Sadly, what I really feel denigrates Sunderland is a bad attitude amongst some areas of the population. There does at times seem to be a great lack of pride and vision. I hope I'm wrong, but I feel this is holding us behind (OM12– IdQ 11)

In the interview, the informant who produced statement (vi) (OM12) admitted that this lack of pride to which he was referring could indeed be attributed to an inferiority complex.

Those people who seemed to look at their city with shame and/or in a negative light were generally not concerned about the Geordie-Mackem rivalry and may even condemn it, as was the example of informant MF26 who regarded as inconceivable the case of a friend of hers whose husband was from Sunderland and would not let her go to Newcastle.

¹⁶ The informants who produced comments (iii) and (iv) were not included in the analysis (they were some of the informants that were discarded after conducting the fieldwork due to the fact that I had interviewed more people than I actually needed – see section 3.4). Yet, I think these answers are highly relevant here.

<MF26> Yeah, I've got friends of mine who are em born and bred Sunderland, very proud of it,
 <L> Mm-mm.
 <MF26> and they will not go to Newcastle at all.
 <OM25> Yeah yeah my brother, my brother [XX] would
 <MF26> This-- a friend--
 <L> Uh-huh.
 <MF26> I've got a friend of mine who moved up here uh from Leicestershire and when she got married, it was like great, lots of shops in Newcastle. We'll go and get you a dress and we couldn't go there because her husband
 <OM25> Because [XX]
 <MF26> would not let her spent-- her-- give her money to them.
 <L> @
 <OM25> Yeah.
 [...]

<MF26> I had a-- a conversation with her a few weeks ago cos she's going to a um a hen party in Newcastle, and I was supposed to be going and I couldn't go in the end. And her husband, I mean, her husband is of like, out (¿now?) Sunderland supporter, absolutely loves it, would never move from Sunderland
 <L> Mm-mm.
 <MF26> and she had got so-- he told her that Newcastle was full of bad people
 <OM25> @
 <MF26> and he wound her up that much she was on the telephone to me in tears because she was so frightened
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF26> that if she got on the train that she would like mugged, murdered
 <L> @
 <MF26> As-- as something would happen to her if she went to Newcastle
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF26> because she's so frightened and she's lived up here um for about seven or eight years.
 <L> Right.
 <MF26> And she can't go-- she can go to Gateshead to the Metrocentre
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF26> because that's o.k. but she can't go to Newcastle.
 <L> Right.
 <MF26> And it's-- it's-- it's a big big thing, and he won't talk to some of my friends who are from Newcastle.

(Interview 13 – 68:49 – 70:20)

This is probably quite an extreme case, but it does demonstrate how intense the rivalry can become.

Some informants, for example MM19 and MM28, generally demonstrated a very strong sense of identity and attachment to Sunderland and held negative views about everything related to Newcastle. These speakers were very proud of Sunderland and of the recent improvements made to the city. Although he could not deny that Newcastle is a more important city and has better public facilities, MM19 regarded the fact that Newcastle tends to be more favoured than Sunderland as a factor that, to some extent, fuels the rivalry between the two communities. He was not the only one who thought in this way. Informant MF26 during the interview explained that this is

precisely one of the reasons that foster the resentment towards Newcastle. She responded to my question ‘do you feel any rivalry since there is a rivalry between the two cities: Newcastle and Sunderland?’

<MF26> I think there’s always been a- a rivalry because Newcastle is-- is-- tends to get everything first.

[...]

<MF26> Eh, I think that’s quite a big thing.

<L> Uh-huh.

<OM25> Whether it’s true or not, you know, it’s what people feel.

<L> Yeah, well it’s a feeling that is present [XX]

<MF26> Yeah and I think there’s quite a lot of resentment.

<L> Mm-mm.

<OM25> Yeah.

<MF26> Because of-- Sunderland is always, I think, seen as Newcastle’s poor relation.

<OM25> Yeah, oh yeah,

<L> Right.

<OM25> It’s a very much poorer city than-- than Newcastle.

(Interview 13 – 65:54 - 67:17)

The differences between the two cities’ economic fortunes, however, do not seem to be the main reason for the rivalry, according to the informants. The next section turns to exploring these hostile feelings in some more detail.

4.2.3 Reasons for the Geordie-Mackem rivalry

Question 15 of the IdQ asked informants to give their opinions about the reasons for the Geordie-Mackem rivalry. Given the fact that the informants were from a wide variety of backgrounds, it should come as no surprise that the responses to this question covered a variety of topics such as: industry, the Civil War, trade, notions of superiority/inferiority etc. Some of the informants, mostly amongst the middle-aged, explained that the feeling has existed for a long time now, and pointed to the industrial past of the two cities and a desire by their respective populations to be better than the other as the reason that fostered that rivalry in the past. Others referred to the Civil War (in 1642) when Newcastle sided with Charles I and Sunderland took Cromwell’s parliamentarians’ side (Dodds 2001: 46). However, the overwhelmingly most frequent response placed football at the heart of the rivalry – 28 out of 30 people agreed on this. This is reflected in some of the answers to question 15:

Brought into focus by football rivalry. Some industrial apartheid. Civil War rivalry, possibly started with rivalry over the coal trade in the Middle Ages. (OM25– IdQ 15)

Football and industrial history, e.g. no Wearsiders permitted to work on the Tyne (allegedly). (MM20 – IdQ 15)

Traditionally competing industry (shipyards, coal miner, port activity), and much more recently, football. (MM14 – IdQ 15)

However, three people – two of them from the youngest age-group (YF06, YM05 and OM12) – commented that they thought that nowadays this rivalry tends to be ‘friendly’ and ‘good natured fun’, if it is kept at that level, although one of them did point out there are a few ‘small minded football fans’ around (YM05 – IdQ 15):

The rivalry can be good fun if it’s kept at that level. There will always be a stupid attitude – I suppose the main problem is I think caused by football fans. I also feel some of the Sunderland populace now feel inferior to Newcastle. A pity as the whole region can be one. If only! (OM12 – IdQ 15)

These comments suggest that there appear to be different ways of expressing or manifesting an affiliation to the local community, and that the Geordie-Mackem rivalry is not unanimously cited by the informants as being of utmost importance. This, however, did not mean a total lack of resentment towards the fact that Newcastle tends to progress more rapidly than Sunderland.

The sharp inconsistencies between informants’ allocation of blame for the rivalry can be seen in the responses of MF26 (see page 112), and MF32 and YM33 who engaged in an interesting discussion about these hostile feelings. MF32 believed that the rivalry is not so much directed from Sunderland towards Newcastle but the other way round. According to her, Newcastle people will rarely go to Sunderland:

<MF32> I mean I personally have no qualms about the area.

<L> Right.

<MF32> Like I do that way, that way or that way, em but you do get Newcastle people won’t really come through here unless they’ve got friends here and they’re close.

<YM33> Hm.

<L> Uh-huh, yeah.

<MF32> It’s that thing like: everybody here will go that way,

<L> Yeah.

<MF32> that way and that way, but you’ll not get many people coming this w- well they do, cos three and a half thousand work in Nissan.

<YM/33> Aye.

<L> Right.

<MF32> But it’s ok to work here but they wouldn’t shop here or they wouldn’t come here.

<L> Mm-mm.

<MF32> They might-- they might go to the theatre or they might go to the Winter Gardens or the beach.

<L> Yeah.
 <YM33> I mean-- I mean younger people more-- from Newcastle mor- tend more to stay where they are.
 <L> So probably it's more a question of Newcastle feeling rivalry towards Sunderland?
 <YM33> Mm.
 <MF32> It's in-bred in them from being young, like I say, that girl [especially?] none of the others [had?] said anything. Em, but this girl, I know it comes from her father.
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF32> It's nothing to do with her. She is not nothing in herself. It comes from her parents.
 <L> Yeah, alright!
 <MF32> So it's in-bred really in them.
 <L> Uh-huh. So do you think that.. em, I don't know, it's all down to football? Is it-- is it only football?
 <MF32> I think it stems from years and years ago. It was work. It was the shipyards and the mining.
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF32> And it was work. And then it became football em which is ironic because, like I say, there's only a certain amount of people who support football.
 <L> Yeah.
 <MF32> So if you don't support football you shouldn't have a problem, but yet it just-- it's-- it's-- it's the way they're brought up, it's the way they socialise, it's the way they're brought up.
 <YM33> I think people who-- people who are affected by those who support the football as well,
 <MF32> Yeah, uh-huh.
 <YM33> I think they're like "oh I don't like him he's a Mackem" or something.
 <MF32> Yes.
 <YM33> You think well, you've got nee reason to dislike him. But they just get affected by other people saying that [XX]
 <MF32> Because you're from Sunderland.

(Interview 17 (72:50 – 74:48))

In this extract MF32 stated that she generally had no problem in going to Newcastle. She had mostly worked in Newcastle and she had friends in Newcastle, even her boyfriend was from Newcastle, and generally she also went shopping there. This is why she explained she had no 'qualms about the area' and did not feel part of the rivalry. For her, it was mainly based on football and therefore she did not engage in it. Her attitude, and that of her male cousin (YM33), led me to consider the possibility of finding a generational divide in terms of including Newcastle as a potential place to go shopping, for leisure or for socialising.

4.2.4 Social activities: Locally or regionally oriented?

In order to investigate the possibility of a generational divide, the responses to question 9 of the IdQ (Where do you like going in your spare time within Tyne and Wear? What is your favourite shopping centre?) were compared. The attitudes elicited

in this question, in combination with questions 11 and 12, would provide some insight into each informant's attitude towards different places in their region. The answers to question 9 suggest differences in the way the three generations organised their spare time and thus different regional orientation, and the differences seem determined by the transport facilities available to them in the course of their lives.¹⁷

- (i) Amongst the YOUNGER AGE-GROUP, only two people suggested Sunderland as a place where they would consider spending their spare time or go shopping. There seemed to be a preference for Newcastle, or the Tyneside conurbation in general, as 80% said they usually go to Newcastle, South Shields, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay. The most popular shopping centre amongst the young was the Metrocentre – again, 80% including it amongst their preferences. The Metrocentre, which is actually located in Gateshead, did not seem to be associated with Newcastle. The orientation of this group towards Tyneside and the Metrocentre, and the concordant alteration in social practices, perhaps resulted from the increase in choices made possible by the dramatic improvement of regional transport and, in particular, the recent extension of the Metro system from Tyneside to Sunderland (completed in 2003).
- (ii) There was far less consensus in the MIDDLE-AGED GROUP, and instead there was a sharp gender divide as regards Newcastle. 40% of this group explicitly admitted that they liked going to Newcastle, and of this 40% three quarters were women. In general, men in this group showed a clear preference for Wearside and Durham, whereas women seemed keener to spend their spare time in places other than Sunderland. All of those who showed a preference for Newcastle were in their early 30s.¹⁸ In contrast to the previous group, though, the middle-aged showed a slightly stronger orientation for Sunderland as a place to spend their spare time or go shopping. 60% included the Sunderland region amongst their preferences. Interestingly, many of the informants did not restrict their answers just to Tyne and Wear (as the question asked them) but also included Durham if that was an option for them. Thus, 40% indicated that they like going to Durham. The wider range of preferences

¹⁷ See appendix 5, which displays in tabulated form all answers produced by the informants to question 9.

¹⁸ In this age-group five people were in their 30s and five in their 40s.

could have been determined by the fact that this generation, at least those in their 40s, have probably experienced more closely than the younger age-group the mixed attitudes towards the 1974 political realignment of Sunderland with Newcastle. This political realignment with the main urban centre of the North-east, which occurred at a stage when they themselves would have been rather young, and the improvement of the links between the two cities must have had some effect upon this generation's social practices. It may have broadened the range of possible places to socialise and enabled them not only to spend time in Sunderland, their town, but also in other places within their region. This could explain their double orientation towards Sunderland, as well as to other places such as Newcastle and Durham.

- (iii) The 50+ AGE-GROUP was more locally oriented, with 60% preferring the Sunderland region for recreation and shopping. Only one male included Eldon Square in Newcastle amongst his choices. People in this group showed a strong attraction for countryside and coastal areas, with 50% suggesting various places around Tyne and Wear – e.g. Tynemouth, South Shields, Seaburn and Weardale. Just one male included Durham and its outskirts amongst his preferences. Whilst people in the older group seemed to enjoy visiting coastal and countryside areas within the region, they showed a stronger orientation towards Sunderland than either of the two younger groups. This could be interpreted as a way of showing their affiliation with their community and their attachment to the city where they have spent their lives. Informant OF13's answer to this question would demonstrate this. Although both she and her husband (OM12) showed a clear preference for visiting other places in their spare time, she expressed her attachment to Sunderland by reinforcing her desire to support her city by going shopping in it:

Tynemouth coast North of Newcastle upon Tyne, South Shields, Whitburn and the coast of Seaburn. Haven't really got a favourite shopping centre but shop in Sunderland. I want to support my town. (OF13 – IdQ 9)

Despite these differences of social orientation across the informant sample by age and gender, the next section will show that the issue of local dialect is far less divisive.

4.2.5 Attitudes to the local dialect

The generally positive attitudes and strong pride shown towards the local variety both in the IdQ and throughout the interviews demonstrate that in general Sunderland people regard their dialect as a symbol of identity and community boundary marker (see section 4.1.4). This section focuses on Sunderland informants' attitudes towards their local variety by looking into their responses to questions 4 to 7 in the IdQ (figure 4.3).

Question 6 was the most general of the four. It did not make specific reference to the Sunderland dialect. In it all speakers, with the exception of YF35 and OM27, regarded accents positively. Most of them agreed that accents are part of the individuals' identity and help to distinguish people from different areas. As MM14 explained, '[a]ccents in the UK English provide you with a grounding of who you are and where you are from' (IdQ 6). YF35 showed a more negative attitude towards having an accent. In her opinion, the problem of having an accent was that 'sometimes people call it'¹⁹ (IdQ 6). OM27, however, said that he was not bothered about accents.

4. Are you proud of your accent or would you rather not have any accent at all?
5. Would you prefer to have a different accent? If so, which one? Why?
6. Do you think it is good to have an accent? Why or why not?
7. Have you ever felt embarrassed about your accent? When? Why?

Figure 4.3: Extract from the Identity Questionnaire – questions 4 to 7

Questions 4, 5 and 7 asked participants specifically about their opinions and perceptions of the local accent. Generally, an affirmative response in question 4 stating that the speaker was proud of his/her accent was followed by a negative one in question 5 stating that they would not prefer to have a different accent. On the contrary, a negative response in question 4 was always followed by a positive one in

¹⁹ 'Call' here means 'call names' or 'insult'.

question 5. This pattern of responses reflected respectively a positive and a negative attitude towards having the local dialect. Out of 30 informants, only four (YF01, YF35, YM05 and MF04) admitted that they did not like their accent and stated that they would rather not have one. If they could choose, all four would prefer to have a different accent: YF01 and her mother MF04 said they would prefer to have a southern accent since, according to the latter, it is 'softer'. YF35 said she would prefer a London accent as it is 'very clear'. YM05, by contrast, opted for an American one given that he intends to move to the US and his accent is difficult to understand. The remaining 26 informants showed a positive attitude towards having the local accent in question 4, and all of them except for one declared that they would not prefer a different accent (question 5). MM20, the only exception, answered that although he had no problem with the accent he had he would not mind having a 'more neutral' one.

In question 7, the same four informants who showed a negative attitude to their accent in questions 4 and 5 also confessed that, on occasions, they had felt embarrassed about their accent. Whilst in the case of YF01 this had happened when she had heard herself on videos or tape, for the other three it seemed to be a matter of fitting in or of sounding 'incorrect':

Yes – when I travel to Leeds I don't fit in. (YF35 – IdQ 7)

Yes. The northeastern accent seems rough and incorrect in comparison to other regions. (YM05 – IdQ 7)

Yes – when down south. We seem so harshly spoken and rough. (MF04 – IdQ 7)

These four were not the only informants that had felt embarrassed about their accent at some point. Despite being proud or happy with the way they speak, YF06, YF09, MM14, OF17 and OM07 admitted having felt ashamed of their accent:

Sometimes, especially when in the south of England and people don't understand me. (YF06 – IdQ 7)

When I was in London on a course because they seemed to think I was thick as I was from the North-east. (YF09 – IdQ 7)

Yes, when I first went to university²⁰. I would remain silent in lectures and shy away from talking to lecturers – this lasted a couple of years! (MM14 – IdQ 7)

²⁰ MM14 went to university in the south – Essex.

Yes when southerners cannot understand me. When I was younger made to feel inferior because of strong accent. I can slow down for southerners. (OM07 – IdQ 7)

It is interesting to note that five out of the nine informants who had felt embarrassed about their accents did so in the presence of southerners, and YF35 felt this way when she visited Leeds. This could be interpreted as a linguistic inferiority complex. However, in her analysis of the 'Geordie Nation', Beal (1999b) refers to the strong feeling of regional identity that characterises the North-eastern community and argues that, because of this, Geordies have always shown pride in their dialect in spite of its being so noticeably different from southern varieties. We can probably expect to find similar feelings towards the local dialect amongst the Sunderland community, especially given that language is one of the socio-cultural phenomena that, according to Wearsiders, differentiates them from Tynesiders.

Despite the fact that speakers from both North-eastern communities claim that there are differences between their dialects, it would be naïve not to acknowledge that, due to their physical proximity, they are bound to have a lot of features in common. Moreover, the fact that they are usually indistinguishable for outsiders would be significant in that respect. The Sunderland speakers appear to be aware that, to an outsider's ear, they sound like Geordies and that, consequently, their dialect might receive the same negative social evaluations that Beal (1999b) claims have existed for the Geordie dialect.²¹

A factor that has inevitably played an important role in the development of negative attitudes towards northern dialects is the North-South cultural divide which has existed in England for centuries. Wales (1999) has argued that here has been a tendency to discriminate against the North in favour of the South or often, more specifically, in favour of the capital. Whereas the South tends to be regarded as the centre of capital and power, the North has historically been more industrial, and thus perceived as poorer and associated with lower living standards. Northern dialects are therefore typically regarded as working class varieties (Wales 1999).

All this would perhaps explain why some of the Sunderland informants had, on occasion, felt embarrassed about their accent. They appeared to believe that their dialect is noticeably different from southern dialects or other northern dialects, and is

²¹ This refers to Beal's (1999b: 37) discussion of Giles and Powesland's (1975) research into language attitudes, and she provides evidence that these perceptions seem to have started to change in the last few years.

often incomprehensible to outsiders and, as a consequence, outside the North-east, they perceive themselves as sounding ‘rough’, ‘incorrect’ or ‘harshly spoken’ and do not ‘fit in’.

It is worth noting at this point the responses obtained to question 14 (Is it necessary to speak with a Sunderland accent to be a Mackem?), which aimed to ascertain whether usage of the local accent was an essential constitutive feature of the ‘Mackem’/Sunderland identity. Whilst most of the informants had demonstrated a positive attitude towards the local accent, the vast majority in this question agreed that allegiance to or membership of the local community is not determined by the way people speak. Whilst the dialect is indeed regarded as an important symbol of identity, for 70% of the informants it is not a prerequisite in order to ‘belong’. The following are some of the arguments they provided:

- (i) No as long as you come from the area. (YF06 – IdQ 14)
- (ii) No because Mackem is a modern phrase. (YF36 – IdQ 14)
- (iii) No, it’s got nothing to do with it, it’s a football thing. (MF32 – IdQ14)
- (iv) No – Mackem is like a nationality. (MM28 – IdQ 14)
- (v) No, because there is no such thing as a Mackem (OF38 – IdQ 14)

Less than 17% believed that speaking with the local accent was an essential factor in order to be considered a ‘Mackem’ and 13% were not sure about it, which seems to imply that, although the local dialect is an extremely strong symbol of the Sunderland community, it is not generally considered a prerequisite for membership of the community (see Dorian’s concept of speech community in 4.1.3).

Throughout section 4.2, socio-cultural phenomena and ideologies that are important to the Sunderland community have been discussed, trying to find out how people define their place in the North-eastern region and, more specifically, in relation to the neighbouring Geordies. It has become clear that not everyone reacted in the same way to the various questions posed in the IdQ, revealing different attitudes towards Sunderland and Newcastle. The extensive amount of first-hand attitudinal qualitative data elicited from the Sunderland speakers is a potentially very powerful tool to provide an in-depth interpretation of the Sunderland identity. This information alone would probably be enough to classify informants into different groups

depending on the way they identify with Sunderland. Inevitably, however, a classification of this type – i.e. based on qualitative data – relies heavily upon the researcher's general impression of how informants' present themselves in the IdQ and throughout the interview. Section 4.3 will discuss how the Identification Score Index (ISI) was used in order to attempt to provide a more objective measurement of the informants' strength of local allegiance.

4.3 IDENTIFICATION SCORE INDEX: ALLEGIANCE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The ISI was the only part of the questionnaire that intended to quantify the strength of the informants' identification with their city and the local community. The questionnaire consisted of six multiple-choice questions and each of the three answers was assigned a value of 1 to 3: 1 being the value of the least locally-oriented answer (i.e. the answer that reflected the weakest feeling of local affiliation) and 3 of the most locally-oriented one. Informants therefore could obtain a minimum score of 6 and a maximum of 18. Placing these scores in a continuum, any score lower than 12 would reflect a negative or non-locally oriented attitude and scores above 12 would show a positive or locally-oriented attitude towards Sunderland.

The mean scores obtained by each of the six speaker groups are shown in figure 4.4, below. In general, males scored higher than females and, in each gender group, the middle-aged were in the lead, followed by the older group and finally the younger informants.

If we place these groups on a continuum (figure 4.5) we find that, according to this index, the middle-aged speakers (both males and females) and the older males were the ones who scored above 12. The group with the strongest sense of local allegiance were the middle-aged males. The younger females obtained the lowest score and therefore in the light of this index were the group with the weakest and least locally-oriented sense of affiliation.²² The older females and the younger males with 11.6 were the groups with the most neutral attitude as their score was very close to 12.

²² In Llamas' (2001) Middlesbrough study, the young adult females, whose ages ranged between 19 and 22, were the ones with the weakest feeling of affiliation.

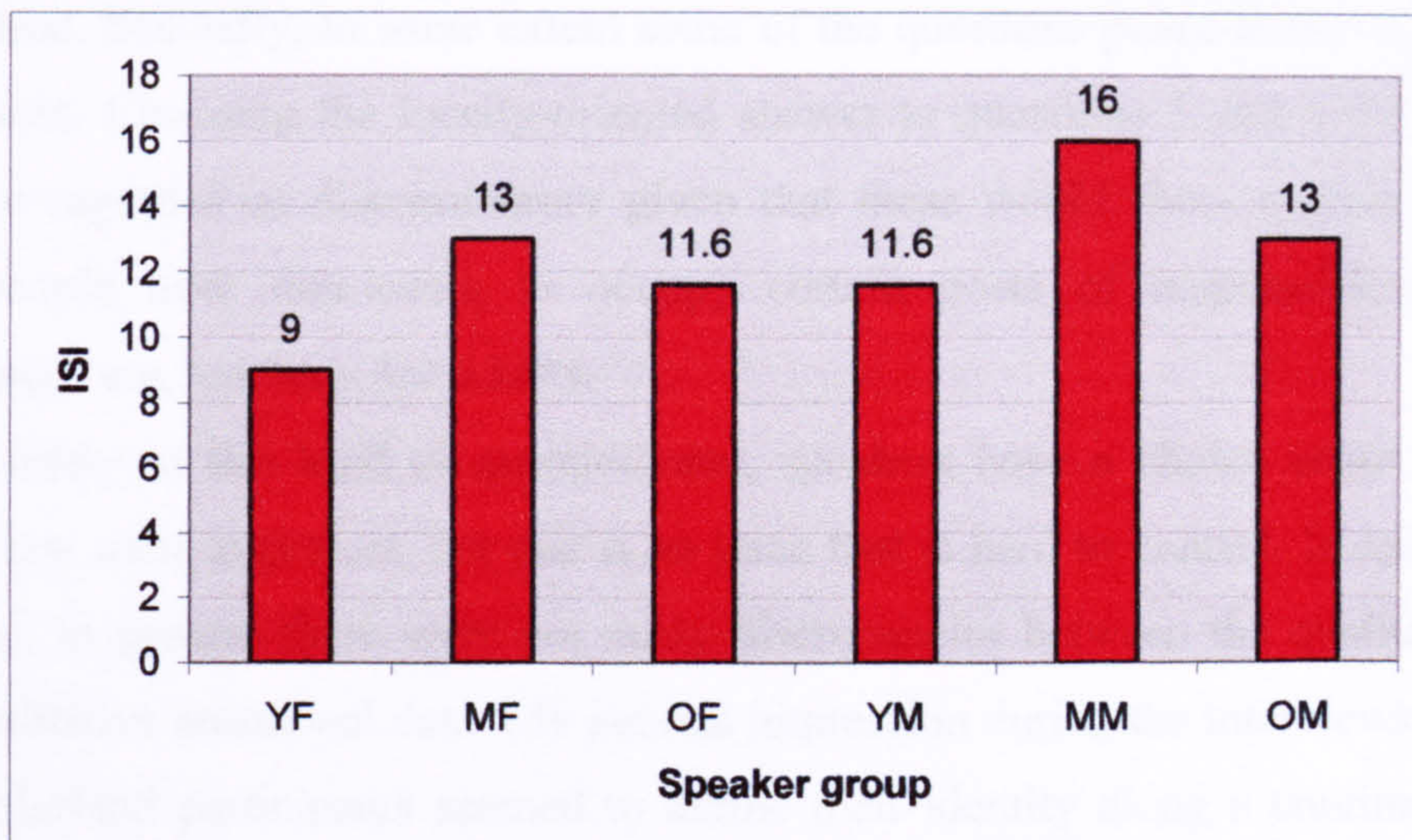


Figure 4.4: Average ISI by age and gender

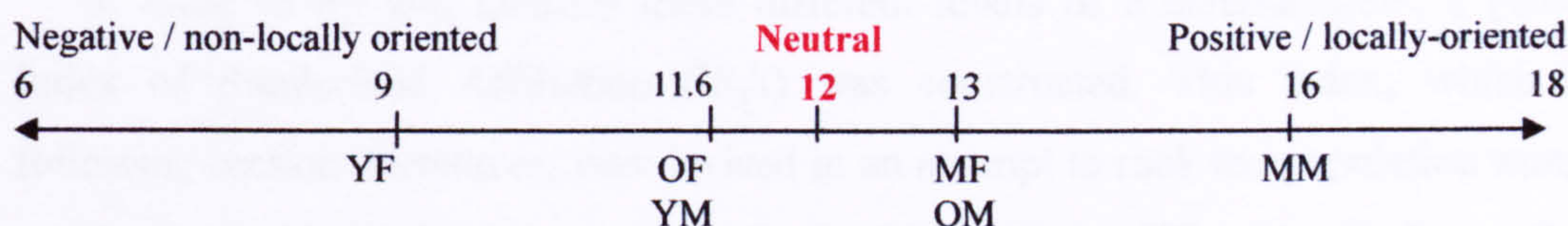


Figure 4.5: Speaker groups placed on a continuum on the basis of their average ISI

Looking at the individual scores, 11 speakers²³ scored less than 12, and 6 speakers²⁴ obtained the neutral score of 12. In general, the first impression was that the informants' ISI was very much in line with the attitudinal data each of them had produced in the IdQ and the interview. The speakers with the lowest scores tended to be those who had shown an outward orientation and whose attachment to the community was weaker. By contrast, those with the highest scores seemed to be mostly those who had demonstrated a strong sense of identity and attachment to their city. A minor cause for concern came from those few participants whose scores did not seem to correlate with the qualitative attitudinal data. There are a number of factors that could have influenced the speakers' responses to the ISI. Firstly, some of the questions reflected a clear orientation to the local community. Knowing that this study aimed at contrasting the Wearside identity to the Tyneside (i.e. Geordie) one, some of my informants could have chosen the answers which they thought I was expecting (or wanted) to obtain, i.e. the ones that expressed a clear allegiance to

²³ Five young females, one young male, one middle-aged female, two older females and two older males.

²⁴ Four young males, one middle-aged female and one older female.

Sunderland. Secondly, to some extent some of the questions posed issues of political correctness. Choosing the locally-oriented answer to questions 3 and 4 for example could be regarded as discriminatory given that these would show a preference for local people over non-locals to occupy certain posts of responsibility in the community, e.g. teachers, local MPs.

Inevitably in this kind of questionnaire, speakers have a choice about the self-image they want to project, but this is an issue that is hard to control. In spite of my concerns, in general there were not many discrepancies between the qualitative and the quantitative attitudinal data. My general impression during the interviews was that the Sunderland participants seemed to define their identity along a continuum of – what I decided to call – ‘Sunderlandness’. In defining themselves along this continuum, different ways of claiming membership in the community emerged.

In order to try and identify these different levels of Sunderlandness, a general Index of Sunderland Affiliation (ISA) was constructed. This index, which the following section introduces, was devised in an attempt to rank the population sample on the basis of their responses to both the IdQ and the ISI – nonetheless, where appropriate, some of the explanations they produced in the interviews were taken into account as well.

4.4 VARIATION IN THE EXPRESSION OF A SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE SUNDERLAND COMMUNITY

In seeking to establish a valid way of categorising individuals, the researcher must somehow develop a way of collating and explaining the attitudinal data. The necessity for the ISA stems from a reaction to Llamas’ (2001: 220-221) approach to collating her attitudinal data. She sought to categorise her speakers using her own impressions of how they had reacted, overall, to the questions posed in the IdQ, and found that her categorisation revealed correlations with age and gender (figure 4.6). However, as a result of the high level of subjectivity, such methods of classification are open to criticism. In her defence, Llamas (2001) acknowledged the danger of relying only upon subjective judgements too: the Identification Score Index aimed to counteract this, as we saw in the previous section. Nevertheless, given some concerns that emerged after comparing the Sunderland informants’ scores to their general reactions to the questions in the IdQ, questions emerged about the reliability of this method to

their willingness to make it clear that they are definitely not Geordies. To a greater or lesser extent, it was important for them that outsiders, especially, realised not only the latter but also that Sunderland has its own distinct identity.

Preliminary analysis of the attitudinal data revealed that it often seemed to be the case that participants who reacted in the same or similar way to a particular prompt generally showed similar or identical reactions to other factors. For example, those who defined themselves as ‘Mackems’ and regarded this label as a way of defining their identity were generally more locally-oriented and often felt some degree of hostility towards their Geordie neighbours. By contrast, those who did not identify with the *Mackem* label and referred to themselves merely as being *from* Sunderland tended to be more outwardly-oriented.

4.4.1 Index of Sunderland affiliation: Diversity of membership

The index was constructed taking the following factors into account:

- (i) Self-definition: ‘Geordie’, ‘Mackem’, ‘from Sunderland’ (IdQ question 1 – see section 4.2.1.2)
- (ii) Opinion of Sunderland (IdQ question 11 – see section 4.2.2)
- (iii) Orientation (based on IdQ questions 9 and 10 – see section 4.2.4)
- (iv) Attitudes to the local dialect (IdQ questions 4-7 – see section 4.2.5)
- (v) The Identification Score Index (section 4.3)

With the exception of factor (iv), these were based on qualitative information elicited in questions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 of the IdQ. In each case, all of the participants’ answers were carefully assessed and then allocated a score that reflected whether the response showed a positive or a negative attitude to the local community and/or its symbols.

(i) USE OF LABELS

As we saw in section 4.2.1.2, not every Sunderland person interviewed felt comfortable using the label *Mackem* to define themselves, preferring to merely

say that they were *from* Sunderland (still, 40% stated their preference for ‘Mackem’ and, to some extent, identified with this label).

The actual range of answers to IdQ question 1 – ‘Do you consider yourself a Mackem, a Geordie or neither of them?’ – was confined to four: (a) ‘Mackem’/’Wearsider’, (b) ‘from Sunderland’ or ‘neither’ a Geordie nor a Mackem, (c) ‘from Houghton’ and (d) ‘Geordie’. And each of them was allocated the scores specified in table 4.2.

Somehow it appeared that those who defined themselves as ‘Mackems’ had chosen to understand the term as not having any negative or offensive connotations and adopted it not only to refer to their Sunderland origin but also as an identity counter-label of the term *Geordie*. Thus, by using it they perhaps felt they were showing pride in their city and the importance of positioning themselves in clear opposition to the Tyneside community. For this reason, it was given the highest value, (+1).

Self-defining label	Score
‘Mackem’/’Wearsider’	1
‘From Sunderland’ / ‘Neither’	0
‘From Houghton’ / ‘Geordie’	-1

Table 4.2: Scores allocated to the labels used by the Sunderland informants

Others, however, believed that this label continued to carry derogatory connotations and/or that it was a relatively recent term that had emerged as a result of the hostile feelings between the two cities. Most of these generally did not understand or relate to this rivalry, thus they did not identify with the term. For them, there did not seem to be any need for a term that defined both their origin and their identity, it was enough to indicate that they were ‘from Sunderland’, which was, in turn, enough to distinguish themselves from the Geordie community. Yet, differentiation in this group was not such a big issue as it was in the previous group.

Another group felt the need to make it clear that they were not exactly ‘from Sunderland’ but from either Houghton or Washington, that is to say districts that have only been part of the City of Sunderland since the re-organisation of county

boundaries in 1974. This suggested that to some extent people in these areas are still trying to retain their own identities and see themselves as separate communities, even though politically they are in the City of Sunderland. This need to emphasise an ideological divide was interpreted as a lack of affiliation to the Sunderland community: hence the negative score, (-1).

OM27, from Houghton-le-Spring, defined himself as a 'Geordie' on the grounds that, for him, anyone from County Durham has always been a 'Geordie'. Again, this label would demonstrate some negative attitude to the Sunderland community, especially given that the term *Geordie* is nowadays primarily used in reference to Newcastle people. He saw himself as a County Durham man and not as someone from the City of Sunderland.

Finally, MF26, who had been born in Kent but had lived in Sunderland since she was one, explained that, if they asked her, she would just say that she lives in Sunderland, which could perhaps indicate that she did not want to be explicitly associated with Sunderland. For this reason her answer was attached a score of (-1).

(ii) ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUNDERLAND

As revealed by informants' answers to question 11 of the IdQ, whilst the majority adopted a positive stance and viewed their city and the improvements it has made recently in a positive light, some demonstrated a more negative attitude towards Sunderland.²⁵ In the ISA a positive perception of place was rated (+1) and a negative perception (-1) (table 4.3). However, there were instances in which the informant had provided both a positive and a negative comment about Sunderland. In such cases, a neutral (0) value was allocated to the informant's overall response and it was considered that the informant had adopted a non-committal stance.

Perception of place	Score
Positive perception	1
Non-committal	0
Negative perception	-1

Table 4.3: Scored allocated to the informants' perceptions of Sunderland

²⁵ See section 4.2.2 for a detailed discussion of the informants' responses to IdQ. question 11

(iii) REGIONAL OR LOCAL ORIENTATION OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Questions 9 and 10 of the IdQ (sections 4.2.4 and 4.2.1 respectively) aimed to ascertain where, within the region, Sunderland people preferred to spend their spare time and develop their leisure activities or social practices.

Responses to question 9 showing a local orientation scored (+1) in the affiliation index (table 4.4). A predominantly outwardly orientation – i.e. preferring other places over Sunderland – received a (-1) score. And responses indicating a region-wide orientation which included both Sunderland and any other places in the region received a (0) score. These scores were allocated on the grounds that (i) a local orientation would be indicative of an emphasis upon local (rather than regional) affiliation; (ii) an outward orientation would be reflective of a negative perspective of Sunderland (some degree of rejection); and (iii) a region-wide orientation may well be interpreted as indicative of the fact that individuals do envisage themselves as part not only of the local community but also of a general North-eastern community.

Orientation	Score
Local	1
Local and regional	0
Only outward	-1

Table 4.4: Scores allocated to the informants' orientation of leisure time

Allegiance to the local football team examined in IdQ question 10 was regarded as another social practice in which some Sunderland people may engage and whereby they may display a local or outward orientation. Thus, those responses which indicated that the informant supported the local football team were allocated a (+1) score. Any responses claiming support for any other football team but Sunderland scored (-1).²⁶ If the informants, however, answered that they did not support any football team, they were allocated a (0) score on the grounds that they merely were not interested (table 4.5).

²⁶ Note that no response was allocated this negative score.

Football team	Score
Sunderland A.F.C	1
None	0
Other	-1

Table 4.5: Scores allocated to the informants' football allegiances

(iv) ATTITUDES TO THE LOCAL SUNDERLAND DIALECT

The fourth factor included in the ISA was the speakers' attitudes towards their local dialect. It became evident in the assessment of their responses to questions 4 through 7 in the IdQ that some did not like speaking with the local accent and that many, on occasion, had felt embarrassed about the way they sounded (section 4.2.5). In order to rate people's language attitudes, only questions 4, 5 and 7 were taken into consideration given that question 6 did not focus specifically on the local accent, whilst the others did prompt the participants to define their stance with respect to their own accent.

First of all, the informants' responses to questions 4 and 5 were examined, since answers to the latter seemed to be determined by the answer given in the former. Three patterns emerged, each of which was allocated a score:

- (a) **Pattern A** – **Two responses against the local accent:** Negative responses to question 4 were always followed by an affirmative response in question 5. Thus, this pattern was allocated a score of (-1) as through it, informants were stating that they were not proud of their accent and that they would rather have a different one.
- (b) **Pattern B** – **One non-committal response and one in favour of the local accent:** Four informants gave a non-committal answer to question 4.²⁷ However, they all produced a negative response to question 5, declaring that they would not prefer to have a different accent. This pattern was given a (0) value.
- (c) **Pattern C** – **Two responses in favour of the local accent:** Answers to question 4 in which informants prided themselves on their accent were always

²⁷ YF06, MF39, MM20 and OM10.

followed by a negative answer in question 4 stating that the informant would not prefer to have a different accent. This pattern was allocated a (+1) value.

Having assessed and valued responses to questions 4 and 5, responses to question 7 were examined. Like question 5, question 7 only allowed for an affirmative or negative answer which indicated whether speakers had ever felt embarrassed of their accent. To avoid ending up with a too widespread range of scores in the ISAs, responses admitting to having felt embarrassed about their accent received a value of (-1), and responses denying having ever felt embarrassed of it received a (0) score.

Thus, in the end, the scores rating the informants' attitudes towards their accent ranged from (-2) to (+1), as shown in table 4.6. The informants' responses to each of these questions could have been allocated a value of (-1), (0) or (+1) in the case of question 4 and either (-1) or (+1) in questions 5 and 7. This, however, would have produced scores as low as (-3) and as high as (+3) for this factor in the ISA; values which would have been three times lower/higher than the highest and lowest scores in any of the other factors. For this reason, a different scoring system was worked out. Responses to 4 and 5 together, and then the value of question 7 was added, thus avoiding making this fourth factor in the ISA worth much more than any of the other factors whose scores ranged between (-1) and (+1) – since they were based on the answers to just one question.

Q. 4&5 → (-1) Q. 7 → (-1)	Q. 4&5 → (0) Q. 7 → (-1)	Q. 4&5 → (+1) Q. 7 → (-1)	Q. 4&5 → (0) Q. 7 → (0)	Q. 4&5 → (+1) Q. 7 → (0)	
YF01 YF35 YM05 MF04	YF06 MM20	YF09 MM14 OF17 OM07	MF39 OM10	YF36 YM02 YM33 YM34 YM43 MF23 MF26 MF32 MM03	MM19 MM28 OF08 OF13 OF37 OF38 OM12 OM27 OM31
-2	-1	0	0	1	

Table 4.6: Responses given by each informant in questions 4, 5 and 7 of the IdQ and overall scores²⁸

²⁸ In this table the first line in the top row indicates the scores obtained by the informants in questions 4 and 5 depending on type of response pattern they displayed (e.g. Q. 4 + 5 = (-1) indicates that the informant showed negative attitudes towards the local accent in both questions – see pattern (a)).

(v) IDENTIFICATION SCORE INDEX

The final factor used in the construction of the ISA was the ISI implemented during the interviews in an attempt to quantify the strength of the informants' allegiance to the local community (section 4.3). In this index informants' scores could range between a minimum of 6 and a maximum score of 18, with the lowest scores being indicative of a weak sense of local allegiance and the highest of a strong sense of local affiliation.

This continuum was divided into three for the purpose of the ISA. Again, this was done so that, like all the previous factors used in the construction of the ISA, each informant's ISI added a maximum score of (+1) and a minimum of (-1). Thus, a total ISI which ranged between 6 and 10 (10 included) received a value of (-1) in the ISA; a score between 10 and 14 was treated as neutral and therefore did not add any value; and 14 (included) to 18 was allocated a value of (+1) (table 4.7).

ISI	Value in the ISA
6 – 10 (10 included)	-1
10 – 14	0
14 – 18 (14 included)	1

Table 4.7: Value of the informants' ISI in the Index of Sunderland Affiliation

4.4.1.1 THE ISA SCORES

Having defined the value of every condition within each of the factors used to construct the ISA, each informant's total score was calculated (see table 4.8). Then informants with the same scores in the ISA were ranked as shown in table 4.10.

As table 4.8 shows, strength of affiliation did not appear to be determined by membership to any particular speaker group.²⁹ High ISA scores were not confined exclusively to a particular age or gender group, since, for example, amongst the young females scores ranged between (-4) and (+3), and between (-4) and (+5) amongst the

²⁹ Table 4.9 shows the informants' scores ordered from lowest to highest.

middle-aged females. Overall, though, some tendencies may be identified if we observe table 4.10:

- (a) With the exception of YF36, all the young females scores ranged between (-4) and (0), whilst the ISA of all the young males but YM05 was between (+1) and (+3).
- (b) Nine of the 15 female participants scored zero or less.

	Factor 1: Labels	Factor 2: Perception of place	Factor 3: Orientation	Factor 3: Football	Factor 4: Accent	ISI	ISA
YF01	1	0	0	1	-2	-1	-1
YF06	-1	1	0	1	-1	-1	-1
YF09	1	1	-1	0	0	-1	0
YF35	1	-1	-1	0	-2	-1	-4
YF36	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
YM02	1	1	-1	1	1	0	3
YM05	-1	1	-1	0	-2	0	-3
YM33	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
YM34	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
YM43	0	1	-1	1	1	-1	1
MF04	-1	0	-1	0	-2	0	-4
MF23	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
MF26	-1	-1	-1	1	1	0	-1
MF32	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
MF39	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	-2
MM03	-1	-1	0	0	1	1	0
MM14	0	0	-1	1	0	1	1
MM19	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
MM20	0	1	0	1	-1	1	2
MM28	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
OF08	1	1	1	1	1	0	5
OF13	0	-1	0	1	1	-1	0
OF17	1	0	-1	1	0	-1	0
OF37	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
OF38	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
OM07	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
OM10	1	0	-1	1	0	0	1
OM12	0	-1	-1	0	1	-1	-2
OM27	-1	0	0	1	1	0	1
OM31	1	0	0	1	1	1	4

Table 4.8: Participants' scores in each of the factors involved in the ISA and total score

	Factor 1: Labels	Factor 2: Perception of place	Factor 3: Orientation	Factor 3: Football	Factor 4: Accent	ISI	ISA
YF35	1	-1	-1	0	-2	-1	-4
MF04	-1	0	-1	0	-2	0	-4
YM05	-1	1	-1	0	-2	0	-3
MF39	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	-2
OM12	0	-1	-1	0	1	-1	-2
YF01	1	0	0	1	-2	-1	-1
YF06	-1	1	0	1	-1	-1	-1
MF26	-1	-1	-1	1	1	0	-1
YF09	1	1	-1	0	0	-1	0
MM03	-1	-1	0	0	1	1	0
OF13	0	-1	0	1	1	-1	0
OF17	1	0	-1	1	0	-1	0
YM33	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
YM43	0	1	-1	1	1	-1	1
MM14	0	0	-1	1	0	1	1
OM10	1	0	-1	1	0	0	1
OM27	-1	0	0	1	1	0	1
MM20	0	1	0	1	-1	1	2
YF36	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
YM02	1	1	-1	1	1	0	3
YM34	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
OF38	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
MF32	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
OF37	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
OM31	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
MF23	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
OF08	1	1	1	1	1	0	5
OM07	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
MM19	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
MM28	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Table 4.9: Participants' scores in each of the factors involved in the ISA and total scores in ascending order

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>YF35</u>	YM05	<u>MF39</u>	<u>YF01</u>	<u>YF09</u>	YM33	MM20	<u>YF36</u>	<u>MF32</u>	<u>MF23</u>	MM19
<u>MF04</u>		OM12	<u>YF06</u>	MM03	YM43		YM02	<u>OF37</u>	<u>OF08</u>	MM28
			<u>MF26</u>	<u>OF13</u>	MM14		YM34	OM31	OM07	
				<u>OF17</u>	OM10		<u>OF38</u>			
					OM27					

Table 4.10: Sunderland sample ranked according to ISA³⁰

³⁰ Yellow cells represent the younger speakers, blue is used in the cells of the middle-aged and green in the cells of the older ones. Females' scores are highlighted in red, underlined font.

- (c) Out of the 12 speakers that obtained an ISA between (-4) and zero, nine were females (four younger, three middle-aged and two older).
- (d) Six males and six females scored between (+3) and (+6). Three of those females were from the older group, two from the middle-aged and one from the younger group.
- (e) The eight participants at the upper end of the scale (scores 4 to 6) were from either the middle-aged or older speaker groups. And the two who obtained the highest score, (+6), were middle-aged males.

These tendencies show that the bulk of the male sample was situated along the positive side of the ISA continuum. With the exception of three, they all scored between (+1) and (+6). By contrast, the female scores were mostly between (-4) and (0) and then between (+3) and (+5). Consequently, overall, as figure 4.7 shows, the younger and middle-aged male speaker groups scored noticeably higher than their female counterparts.

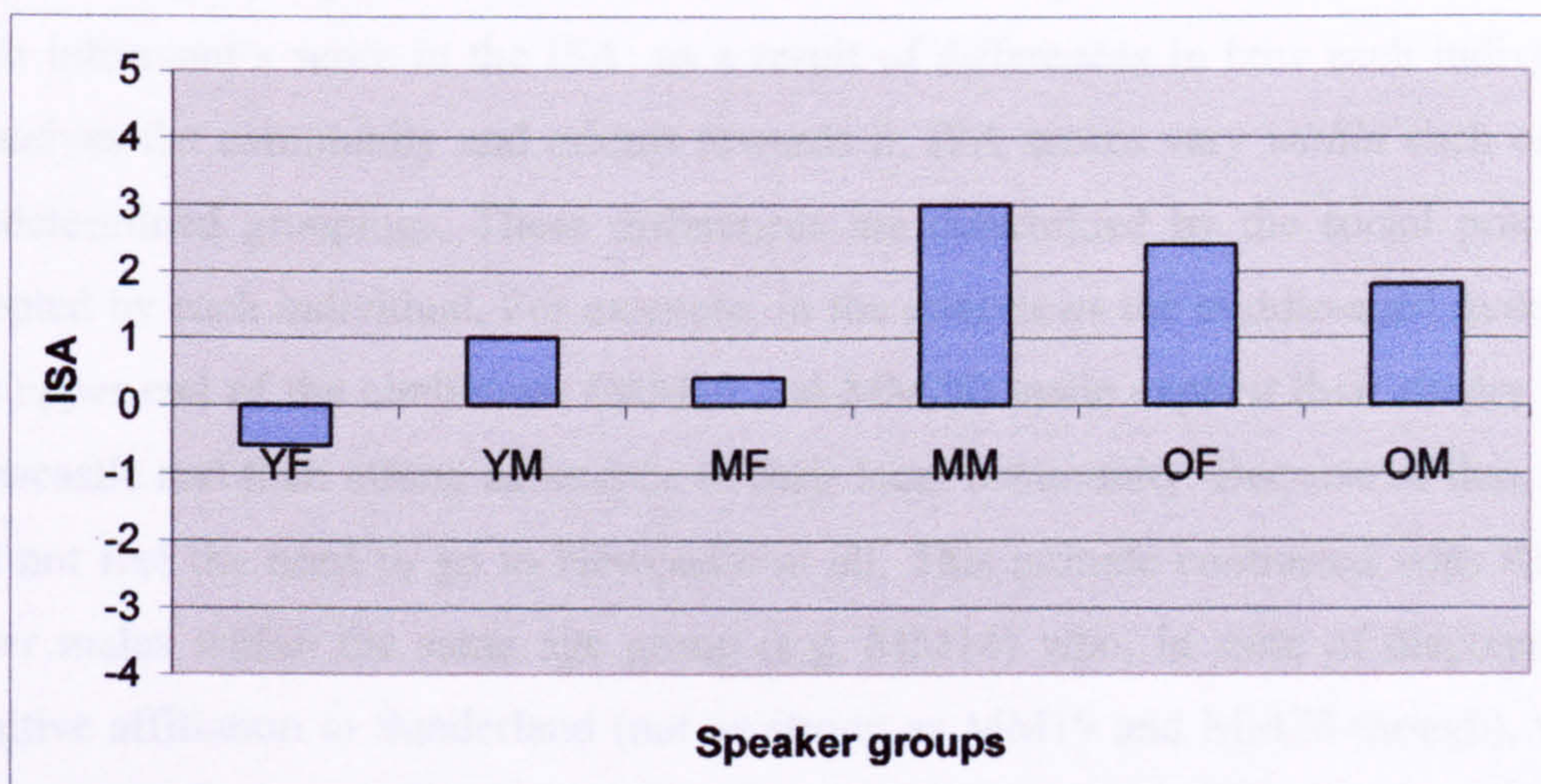


Figure 4.7: Average ISA by age and gender

The younger females were the only group whose average ISA turned out to be negative. The second lowest score was that of the middle-aged females, whose total average was (+0.4) as a result of the clear divide reflected by the individual scores. In this group, three females obtained negative ISA values, whilst the other two obtained comparatively higher scores (+4) and (+5) respectively. The older males' overall

score was slightly lower than the older females, once again due to the wide range of scores obtained in this group.

However, whilst the overall figures of the six speaker groups may be interesting, I would argue that the main interest and the main value of the ISA lies in the fact that it demonstrates how problematic pigeon-holing informants in predetermined social categories can be. In the past, as was discussed in chapter 3, there has been a tendency in variationist research to treat gender, age and socio-economic groups as rather homogeneous categories. Moreover, even whole populations within regions, like the Sunderland and Newcastle people in the North-east, are often presented as being rather homogeneous when reference is being made to their local identities and the hostile feelings they hold towards one another. Nevertheless, the analysis of the Sunderland attitudinal data confirms that in the speech communities we study the speakers' identity and their place with respect to the local community have often been seen as solely determined by their membership of predetermined/biological categories or local groups. However, there are ideological and attitudinal factors which appear to be essential in the construction of individual selves and it is through these that Sunderland people position themselves in the community. This is clear if we observe each informant's score in the ISA: as a result of differences in how each individual perceives the community and orients towards it, ISA scores vary *within* each of the predetermined groupings. These differences are determined by the social practices adopted by each individual. For example, in the interviews the middle-aged males on the upper end of the continuum (MM19 and MM28) made explicit their rivalry with Newcastle and their strong adherence to their local community. Because of that, they did not feel the need to go to Newcastle at all. This attitude contrasted with that of other males within the same age group (e.g. MM14) who, in spite of displaying a positive affiliation to Sunderland (not as strong as MM19 and MM28 though), were more open about going to Newcastle and even socialising there. In the same way as personal ideologies may have an influence upon where people socialise, they may have an influence upon their language usage. The wish to reflect social distance from particular groups may lead to language change. For this reason, given the diversity of identities identified within the Sunderland community, the analysis of the different

linguistic variables in this study was intended to ascertain whether strength of ISA obtained by individual speakers correlated with their linguistic usage.³¹

Throughout this chapter, it has been interesting to observe how the Sunderland informants seem to agree upon what constitute some of the most important symbols and ideologies of this North-eastern group: the local dialect, the local football team, social labels, the need to distinguish themselves from Geordies, the ideological boundaries of the community and so on. Having established the local dialect as one of the main elements that may distinguish Sunderland people from Newcastle people, now the following chapter turns to introduce the Sunderland variety and the linguistic features chosen for analysis, a choice which was made on the basis of the speakers linguistic perceptions.

³¹ See chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Chapter 5

Perception of language differentiation in Sunderland

Throughout chapter 4 we have had the chance to explore some of the attitudes and ideologies that play a major role in the construction of the Sunderland local identity. The approach to the attitudinal data collected in the city demonstrated that, like any other type of social identity, this local identity is a complex social and emotional construct which is expressed differently by different individuals, even within the same age or gender groups. This diversity of expression, however, did not appear to compromise membership of the community. Furthermore, in spite of the varying degrees of affiliation to the local community, there was consensus over the fact that Sunderland is often wrongly identified as being part of the Geordie community and it is, consequently, important that Sunderland be acknowledged as a place with its own separate identity. As mentioned in section 4.1.2, this tendency by geographical outsiders to classify Sunderland people as ‘Geordies’ is generally based on their inability to tell the difference between the various local dialects that exist in the North-east: as MF04 explained, people think that ‘everybody from the North-east speaks like ‘Why aye!’’¹ For outsiders, most of the North-eastern dialectal varieties sound basically the same: they are all ‘Geordie’ English and, by extension, all North-easterners are Geordies.

This chapter focuses on this notion of linguistic similarity and difference within North-eastern Englishes. Section 5.1 introduces the North-eastern dialect area and provides an overview of studies that have been conducted into the North-eastern varieties. As we will see, research in this area has mostly focused on Tyneside and Northumberland and, to some extent, Durham. However, until recently, very little or no research had been conducted in other localities like Middlesbrough, Darlington or Sunderland. Later on, section 5.2 will review perceptions of difference between Sunderland and Tyneside English or other North-eastern varieties provided by the Sunderland speakers. This review will rely upon the responses elicited by those questions in the IdQ which specifically asked informants to provide their views on the

¹ Interview 2 (59:50 - 59:54).

regional varieties. Before conducting this review, it will be useful to establish the evidence for folk-linguistic classifications of North-eastern varieties.

The tendency by non-linguists to group together all the North-eastern varieties has been attested by Montgomery's (2007) study into folk language perceptions conducted in three Northern English locations: Crewe, Kingston-upon-Hull and Carlisle. Implementing methods initially developed by Preston (1989, 2002) for the identification of speakers' mental maps of dialect areas, Montgomery's study in the North of England aims to

- Examine the extent of agreement or disagreement over the placement of a north-south dividing line
- Investigate number and naming of perceptual dialect areas by non-linguist informants
- Examine levels of informant agreement over perceptual dialect areas

(Montgomery 2005a)

We are interested here in Montgomery's second objective; that is, to identify the main dialect areas that the participants of this study distinguish in the UK, and, more specifically, to consider their responses in relation to the North-east of England.

Informants were asked to draw boundaries on a blank map of the UK around those regions that they perceived as individual dialect areas – regions whose dialects were different – and attach a label and/or comment on each of the areas delimited. All the participants' hand-drawn maps were later superimposed electronically onto a 'master' map. Map 5.1, below, shows the resulting composite map, and, as can be seen, the whole of the North-east – i.e. Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Teesside – came up as an independent dialect area. This dialect zone was generally labelled as 'Geordie' (Newcastle).

Many of the Sunderland participants commented on the fact that the dialect of the North-east is generally perceived by the rest of the country as 'Geordie'. YM43, for example, who was from Washington but was at university in Sheffield when the interview was conducted, explained that people at university tended to call him 'Geordie' because they were not able to distinguish TE from SundE. Yet, Geordies would immediately identify him as a Mackem:

<YM43> I know I get called Geordie sometimes in uni.
<L> Mm-hm.

<YM43> But I do know a couple of people from Newcastle or who support Newcastle who class themselves as Geordies so they call me 'Mackem' because they can distinguish it.

(Interview 23 (58:57 – 59:10))

<YM43> I get..annoyed when people..call me a Geordie.

<L> Mm-hm. So that's annoying for you.

<YM43> Yes because..well I mean although they--they pick up at my accent and say oh he's from North-east of England.

<L> Mm-hm.

<YM43> He's from Newcastle.

<L> Yes.

<YM43> It's the first place people think of, which is fair enough.

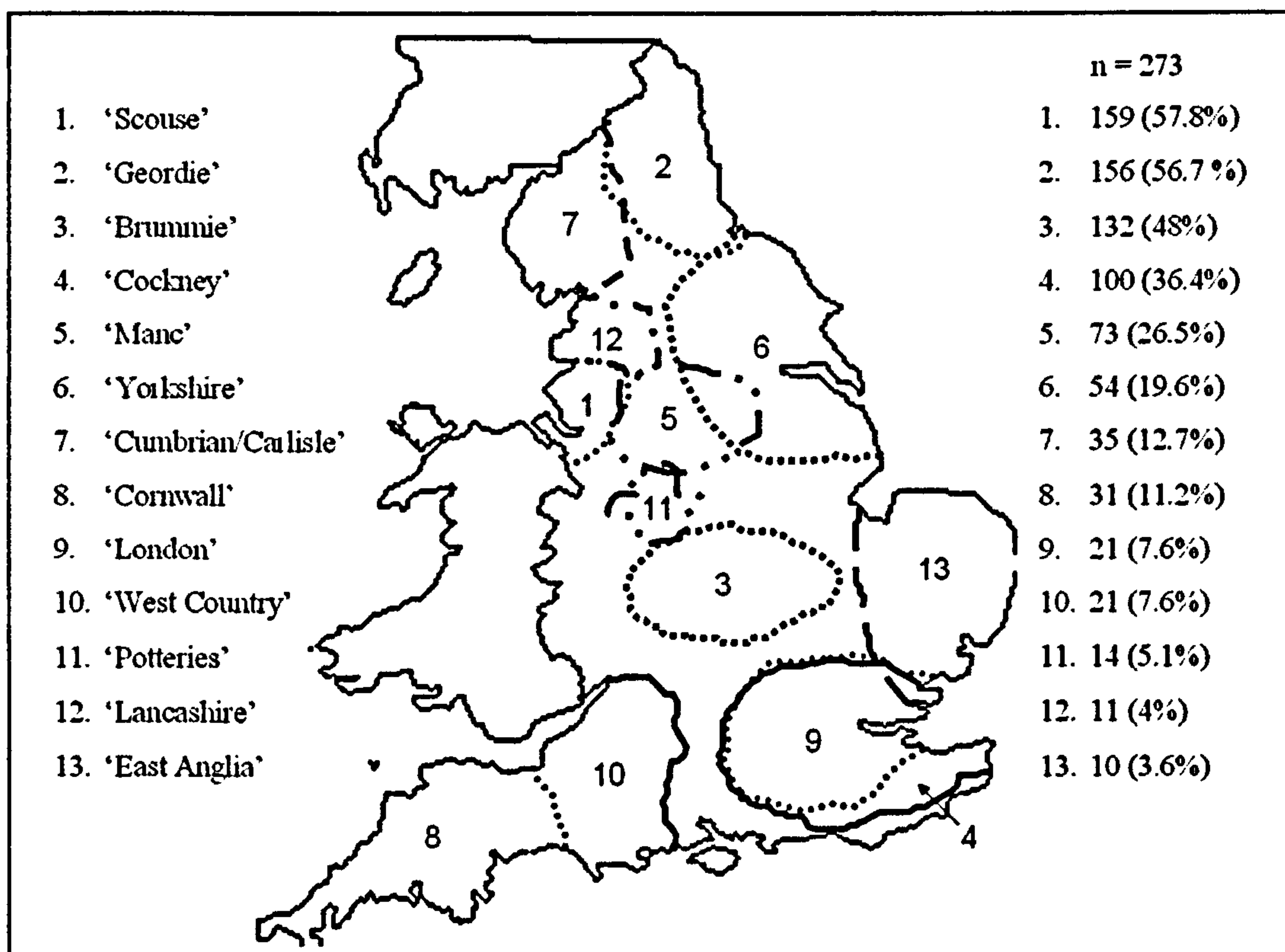
<L> Yes it the big place there so.

<YM43> Yes but em I--I get annoyed because

<L> You're not a Geordie.

<YM43> I associate it with supporting Newcastle United.

(Interview 23 (59:55 - 60:25))



Map 0.1: All informants' composite perceptual map showing results for English dialect areas over 1% of total lines drawn (>20% agreement) (Montgomery 2007)

Outsiders' perceptions are not completely unfounded, though. The dialect areas identified by non-linguists in Montgomery's study (map 5.1, above) resemble dialect areas based on linguistic data. A general review of how modern dialectology has delimited the different dialect regions in England shows that the whole of the North-

east, from Teesside to the eastern side of the English-Scottish border, tends to be grouped together (Trudgill 1990, Wells 1982). Map 5.2 is a composite map which is the result of the superimposition of the distribution areas of seven 'major' accent features that, according to Trudgill, help distinguish modern dialect areas. In the light of this, the various local dialects within the North-eastern area share a good number of features, which would explain why they all tend to be perceived as 'Geordie'. Wells, on the other hand, goes as far as to classify SundE as 'Geordie':

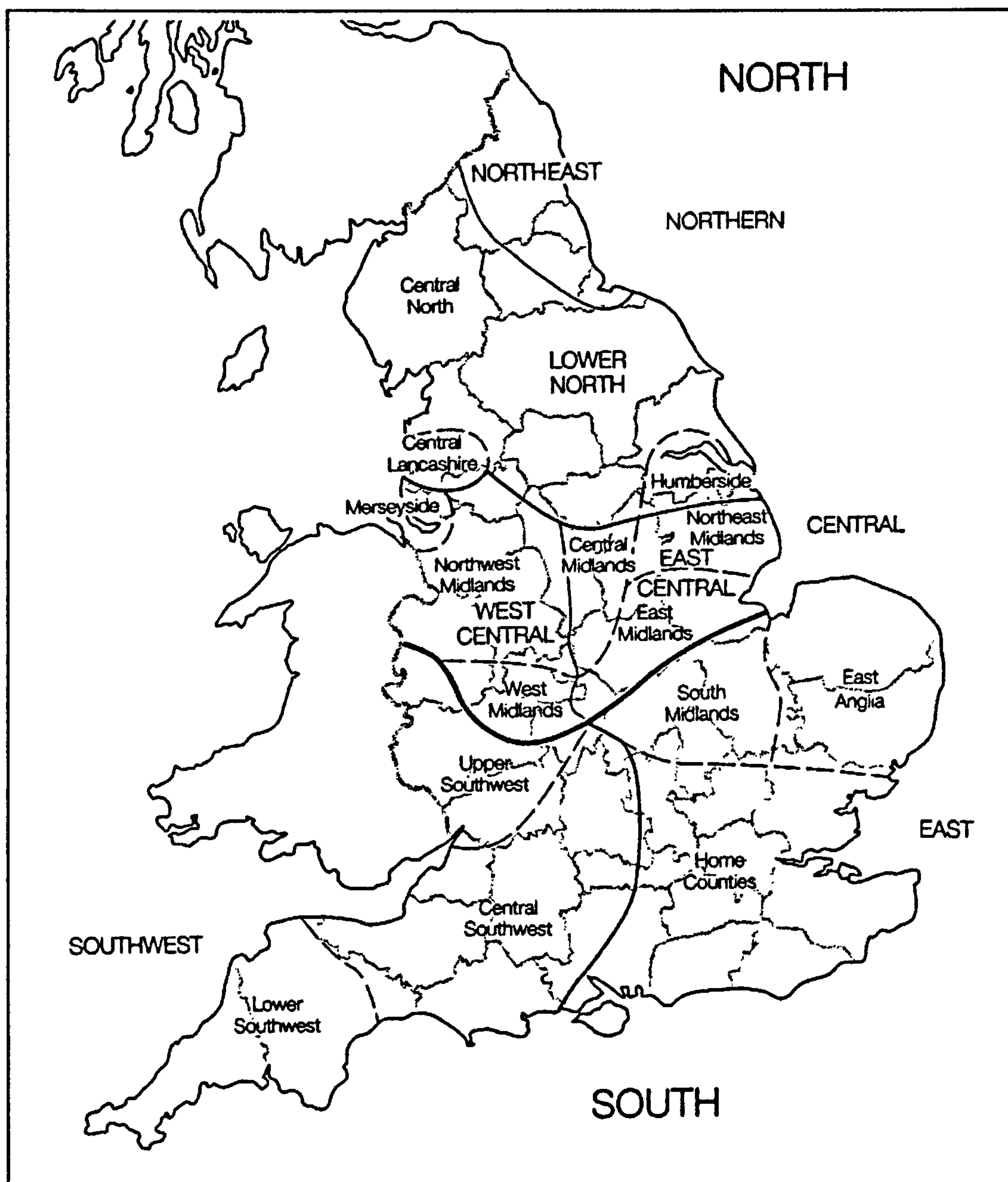
The largest conurbation in what I have called the far north is conveniently referred to as Tyneside and Wearside, it comprises Newcastle-upon-Tyne itself together with the surrounding urban areas, formerly straddling the border between County Durham and Northumberland but now constituting the metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear. Its accent is known as Geordie [...] - a name applied also to its traditional dialect, and also of course to anyone who comes from Tyneside (1982:374) [*Emphasis in original*].

Wells' use of the *Geordie* label here is interesting. Whilst testimonial evidence provided by Sunderland people in the older generation (see chapter 4) suggested that at some point in the past Sunderland and Durham people would have been happy to be classed as 'Geordies'², it is not clear when exactly this term started to be rejected by people from these areas and particularly when the 'Geordie' vs. 'Mackem' distinction became so salient in the region. Thus, two interpretations of Wells' use of 'Geordie' are possible: Either in the early 1980s the label was still accepted region-wide; or he may have disregarded regional social distinctions and, following nation-wide naming practices, aligned all people in the region as 'Geordies'. In the case of the former explanation, it could be argued that at some point, maybe in the early 1980s, some change took place within the Sunderland community that led to the creation of a salient and distinct Sunderland identity.

In this respect, Johnstone *et al.* (2006: 79), citing Gal and Irvine (1995) and Silverstein (1998), remind us that as dialects are social constructs created by those who use them, they are liable to change if the social groups who use them change. Johnstone *et al.* refer to increasing geographic mobility and the consequent language contact that takes place as factors that: (i) may make such communities especially aware of themselves as a group and of their language; and (ii) may thus lead to changes in language usage and ideology. In the early 1980s, when Wells' (1982)

² This has also been pointed out to me by other people who in some way or another have been or are related to Sunderland.

publication came out, Sunderland's administrative boundaries had only recently been incorporated into Tyne and Wear. Given that there was not a political boundary separating Sunderland and Newcastle any longer, Sunderland people may have then felt the need to find new ways of maintaining distinctiveness and marking that boundary.



Map 5.2: Trudgill's (1990) Modern dialect areas

It is to be expected, however, that the local varieties of the North-east also have features that distinguish one from another; hence North-easterners' ability to

distinguish SundE, TE, DuE and Middlesbrough English (henceforth MbE). As Trudgill explains:

[o]f course, there remain distinctive differences *within* all of these areas – no one from Middlesbrough would mistake a Tynesider for someone from Middlesbrough – but the accents are sufficiently similar to be grouped together, and sufficiently *different* from those of other areas. Londoners, for instance, might mistakenly think that Middlesbrough speakers were from Newcastle, but they would be much less likely to think that they were from, say, Sheffield (1990: 77).

To a certain extent, this would appear to excuse those from outside the North-east for taking a Mackem for a Geordie. A certain level of familiarity with the regional vernacular norms seems to be essential when making more fine-grained language distinctions within the North-east.

5.1 THE NORTH-EASTERN DIALECT AREA

Dialectologists have argued that south-eastern English varieties tend to be more innovative than northern, south-western and west-midland dialects, which in turn tend to be regarded as more conservative (Ihalainen, 1994: 262-263). This seems to be the result, firstly, of geographical distance from the main ‘centre of ‘power’, government, monarchy and cultural prestige’, London (Wales, 1999). According to the gravity model of *geographical diffusion*, linguistic innovations generally spread out in a wave-like form from an economically and culturally dominant focal area: they are adopted first in immediately adjacent localities, and then in increasingly more distant ones (Trudgill 1983b, Britain 2002, Kerswill 2003). Thus, in England, linguistic changes that start off around London will take longer to reach those areas that are more distant from this centre of innovation, or they may not reach them at all. Ihalainen, however, suggests that ‘cultural, social and economic differences may turn out to be *an even more efficient wall against southern influence.*’ [*My italics*] (1994: 263). These two factors – geographical distance and socio-economic differences – can partly account for the linguistic conservatism of the Northern English varieties and, more specifically, for the North-eastern varieties which concern us here.

Alongside regions such as Cumbria and Cornwall, the North-east is one of the most physically distant regions from London and, as Harry Pearson (1994 cited in Beal 1999: 35) suggests:

In the North-east, England, or rather the notion of England, seems a long way off. The North-east is at the far corner of the country but it is separated by more than just miles. There is the wilderness of the Pennines to the west, the emptiness of the North Yorkshire moors to the south and to the north, the Scottish border.

As a result, the physical distance and its topographical isolation seem to have fostered, historically, a general regional sense of cultural, social and political alienation. Moreover, the North-eastern dialect varieties have typically been characterised as being radically different from Southern English varieties. Wells (1982: 350), in this respect, refers to the North of England as the zone where traditional dialects managed to survive more strongly, and argues that linguistic differentiation seems to accentuate itself and become sharper the further north we go. It is to be expected, therefore, that North-eastern English, being one of the northernmost varieties will differ starkly from southern varieties. Furthermore, this variety not only shows a clear affinity with other northern varieties, but given its position it also displays similarities with Scottish English.

Most of the research conducted into North-eastern English in the last 50 years has focused on Northumberland and the dialect of Newcastle upon Tyne. The *Tyneside Linguistic Survey*, carried out in 1969, was the first major sociolinguistic study at a time when the quantitative variationist approach was only emerging and the focus of attention had just shifted from traditional rural dialects to urban dialects. The survey aimed to ‘determine the ecology of varieties of spoken English in urban areas’, that is, ‘having identified the speech varieties themselves, to determine commonness or rarity of each and define their distribution across social attributes’ (Pellowe *et al.* 1972: 1). Between 1994 and 1996 Milroy *et al.* conducted the survey of *Phonological Variation and Change in Contemporary Spoken British English* (PVC), a sociolinguistic study of the phonological changes that Tyneside English was undergoing. Based on the PVC data, ongoing processes of accent levelling and diffusion have been widely studied along with a number of accent features characteristic of this variety (see Docherty, Foulkes, Milroy, Milroy, and Walshaw (1997); Docherty and Foulkes (1999); Foulkes and Docherty (2000); Watt (2000, 2002); Watt and Milroy (1999)). Later on, building on the findings of the PVC, the *Emergence of Structured Variation in the Speech of Tyneside Infants* (ESV) project examined ‘the phonetic and

phonological development of 40 children aged between 2 and 4 years, from the city of Newcastle upon Tyne' (Foulkes, Docherty and Watt 1999).

Recently, a single corpus of data, the *Newcastle Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English* (NECTE),³ has been created at the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University. This has put together the TLS and PVC collections and made them available online to the research community. The development of this corpus has enabled the study of various aspects of the Tyneside variety by the researchers involved in this project (e.g. Beal and Corrigan (2002 and 2006) on relativisation; Beal and Corrigan (2005) on negation; Allen *et al.* (2004) on the influence of Irish on Tyneside English; Allen *et al.* (2005) on phonetic variation; Maguire (2004) on the reversal of the NURSE/NORTH merger, and Rowe (2007) on the use of *div* and *divvent*). It has also allowed them to make real-time comparisons of the Tyneside dialect as it was spoken in the late 1960s and the 1990s (e.g. Beal and Corrigan 2000).⁴

Apart from these three major projects conducted in Tyneside (the TLS, PVC and the NECTE), a number of researchers have studied different aspects of the Tyneside dialect. Amongst those who have examined its main grammatical features are McDonald (1981), who studied the modal verb system in TE; and Beal, who has researched not only the TE grammar but also some of the most characteristic features of the Tyneside accent and issues of local identity, which serve as a determinant factor that helps to preserve some of the most stereotypical features of this urban variety (cf. Beal 1985, 1993a, 1993b, 1999a 1999b, 2000a, 2000b). It seems the Tyneside accent has been the main focus of attention in variationist research conducted in this area. We can mention, for example, Beal (1985 and 2000b) on the lengthening of <a> and the spread of HAPPY-tensing respectively; Milroy, Milroy, and Hartley (1994) and Milroy, Milroy, Hartley, and Walshaw (1994) on local and supra-local change which explores the case of glottalisation; Maguire's (2005, 2007) examination of the TLS corpus in search for evidence of the 'NURSE/NORTH merger' and its possible reversal in 1970s TE and Roach (1973) also on glottalisation.

Whilst dialect studies in North-east England have not been scarce, the tendency has been for them to generally focus on Tyneside and Northumberland English; that

³ <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/necte.htm>

⁴ For a more detailed list of publications and papers emerging from the NECTE corpus go to: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/necte/publications.htm>

is, what Trudgill (1990) defined as the far north dialect area. By contrast, very little research has been done into the dialects of nearby areas such as County Durham, Wearside and Teesside. After the Survey of English Dialects, Kerswill (1984, 1987) is the only dialectologist who has carried out some research into Durham English (DuE). More recently Llamas (2001) has looked into language variation and change and identity in the Teesside area. Yet, despite the rivalry that exists between Newcastle people and the inhabitants of Sunderland, no study has attempted to look into the Sunderland dialect.

Currently, studies are also being conducted into the dialect and identity of another two North-eastern locations: Berwick upon Tweed (Llamas *et al.* 2006; Pichler, forthcoming; Watt 2006) and Darlington (Atkinson, forthcoming).

5.2 FOLK-LINGUISTIC AWARENESS IN SUNDERLAND

Given that folk-linguistic perceptions of the English dialect areas tend to conflate the North-eastern varieties into one homogenous region (Montgomery 2007), and the most recent classifications of modern English dialects (Trudgill 1990 and Wells 1982) present the whole of the North-east as an individual dialect area, the Sunderland study aimed to identify some of the dialect features that distinguish the Wearside dialect from the Tyneside one. This was motivated by my own experience of living in Sunderland and working in two secondary schools in the Hylton Castle area and Houghton-le-Spring (both in Sunderland) two years before beginning this study. During this time, informal conversations with local people made it clear that the local variety is regarded as an important symbol of local identity and perceived to be different from other North-eastern varieties. Thus, since the Sunderland dialect appeared to be strongly embedded in the local ideological context and it was not clear for me, as an outsider, where to start looking for those differences that, according to the locals, distinguished their dialect from TE, I decided to explore my informants' perceptions of difference and ascertain whether these bear any relation to their actual linguistic usage.

In contrast with questions 4 to 7 from the IdQ, which aimed to elicit general attitudes towards the Sunderland dialect (section 4.2.5), questions 2, 3 and 8 were intended to elicit more specific folk-linguistic perceptions of the local variety. They asked the Sunderland informants to define their own accent, think about specific

features that they thought might distinguish their variety from other North-eastern varieties, especially TE and DuE, and finally reflect on their ability to identify different varieties within the North-east (figure 5.1). All this information would provide some insight into how Sunderland people themselves, rather than outsiders, define and perceive their own variety and how they situate it with respect to other North-eastern varieties.

<p>2. What accent do you think you have (e.g. Sunderland, Newcastle, Durham accent, etc)?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>3. Is your accent different from the accent of nearby cities such as Newcastle and Durham? Can you think of any specific ways in which it is different? For instance, are there any words which are pronounced differently?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>8. Are there different accents in the North-east? If there are, what are they? Do you like them? Can you tell them apart easily?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Figure 5.1: Extract from the Identity Questionnaire – question 2, 3 and 8

5.2.1 Speakers' definition of their accent

By asking informants to provide a label for their own accent, question 2 sought to confirm that the speakers were willing to regard the variety they speak as being independent from other regional varieties.

Interestingly, the answers provided by the informants from Houghton-le-Spring supported the ideological divide identified in the responses to IdQ question 1, where this same group of speakers did not think of themselves as being from Sunderland (section 4.2.1.2). With the exception of YF01 and MM03, the group from Houghton-le-Spring (YF06, YM02, YM05, MF04, and OM27) defined their accent as being a 'Durham' accent. YM05 in particular explained that his accent was 'possibly Durham

with a hint of pitmatic'⁵, and MF04 specified that she did have a Durham accent but 'more local' (MF04 – IdQ 2), acknowledging variation in the County Durham dialect and, thus, indicating that she spoke one of its localised variants. This tendency to label their accent as a Durham one suggests that this locality may still retain a strong affiliation to County Durham, in spite of having been part of the City of Sunderland in Tyne and Wear for over three decades.

All of the speakers who were from what has been historically known as Sunderland defined their accent as a 'Sunderland' accent. The only two exceptions were OM12 and OM13, one of the older couples who, throughout the interview, demonstrated that, although Sunderland is now part of Tyne and Wear, they still felt a stronger affiliation to County Durham. OM12's answer to question 2 clearly reflected this attachment:

I believe my accent is mostly Sunderland but as Sunderland was County Durham I think that has some influence, a one of the varied Durham dialects. (OM12 – IdQ 2)

OF13's first reaction was to classify her accent as a 'Durham' one, due to the fact that she was born in Fence Houses, However, she acknowledged that since she had lived in Sunderland ever since she got married, her accent may have shifted towards the Sunderland one.

Only one person actually used the label *Mackem* to refer to his accent. This was MM28, who was one of the two middle-aged males who obtained the highest score in the ISA (section 4.4.1.1).

In general, it seems that the way in which the accent is perceived and defined is dependant upon people's individual identities and affiliations. Whilst all of the localities within the City of Sunderland, including Sunderland itself, were separated from County Durham in 1974 to become part of Tyne and Wear, some of those localities, namely Houghton, Hetton, Fence Houses and Washington, were further affected by the fact that, as a result of this re-distribution of political boundaries, they were assigned to the local authority of the City of Sunderland. Thus, strictly speaking, people from Sunderland itself were only affected by a change of county, which means that they could still affiliate with their city. However, localities like Washington, Fence Houses and Houghton not only underwent a change of county, but also a

⁵ *Pitmatic* is the name given to what is perceived to be a distinct regional/occupational variety spoken by miners in the North-east of England.

change of administrative local authority, becoming officially part of Sunderland. This may explain why they would rather label their accent after the county to which they used to belong and to which they may still show more affiliation than label it after their new county or borough.

Furthermore, the City of Sunderland extends over a rather large area that includes some of the old County Durham mining villages e.g. Washington, Houghton-le-Spring, Fence Houses and Hetton-le-Hole. Therefore there is likely to be some dialectal variation between different areas within the city. Many of the informants actually pointed out that it was possible to distinguish people from different parts of the city by the way they spoke. Thus, by assigning the 'Durham' label to their accent, Houghton (and Fence Houses) informants are not only reflecting their identity but also indicating explicitly that there is language variation within the boundaries of the City of Sunderland and that they perceive the variety from this east end of the City of Sunderland as being closer to DuE than SundE.

5.2.2 Perception of variation across the North-east

In question 8, informants were asked to reflect on their ability to perceive variation in the North-east and thus identify some of the varieties spoken in the area. This question sought to provide some support for Trudgill's belief (quoted on page 143) that, whereas for outsiders it may be impossible to distinguish a speaker from Middlesbrough from another from Newcastle, North-easterners are able to make more fine-grained distinctions.

With the exception of one of the young females who said that she was only able to distinguish Geordies and Mackems, the majority of the Sunderland informants claimed that they are able to distinguish the different accents of the North-east (see table 5.1). Two of them, though, pointed out that they were only able to tell the difference when the speakers had a broad accent.

	Responses	Young	MA	Older	Total N.
Tyneside	Newcastle/Geordie	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	22
	Tyneside		✓		1
	South Shields	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	7
	North Shields		✓		1
	North Tyneside		✓		1
	South Tyneside		✓	✓	2
	Gateshead	✓	✓		2
Wearside	Sunderland/Mackem	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	20
	Wearside		✓		1
	Washington			✓	1
	Northumbrian	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	6
Co. Durham	Durham	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓	11
	North Durham			✓	1
	East Durham	✓		✓✓	3
	West Durham	✓		✓✓✓	4
	Darlington			✓✓✓	3
Teesside	Teesside	✓	✓	✓	3
	Middlesbrough	✓		✓✓✓✓	5
	Hartlepool	✓✓	✓	✓✓	5
	Stockton		✓	✓	2
	Saltburn		✓		1
	Yakker (derog. pitman)		✓		1
	Old colliery places			✓✓✓	3

Table 5.1: North-eastern accents identified by the Sunderland informants in IdQ question 8 and number of times each of these accents was given as a response.⁶

The most frequently acknowledged dialects were Newcastle/Geordie, Sunderland/Mackem and Durham (each of them mentioned 22, 20 and 11 times respectively), followed by Northumbrian, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool (cited six,

⁶ In this table, males' responses are shown in black, and females' responses in blue.

five and five times, respectively). Some of the informants, however, indicated that there is variation within Tyneside, Durham and Teesside. Within Tyneside, areas that were specifically referred to as sounding slightly different from 'Geordie' were North and South Tyneside, Gateshead, North Shields and, in particular, South Shields, which was mentioned by seven people. In Durham, the varieties from East, West and North Durham and Darlington (in South County Durham) were perceived as different by some. Finally, some indicated that there is variation between the localities from Teesside. One of the older males (OM12) even referred to the fact that 'Darlington and Stockton are close to becoming Yorkshire in sound' (OM12 – IdQ 8). A small number of male speakers made reference to the fact that the old colliery villages across the whole region (e.g. Ashington, Hetton, Houghton, Washington) sound different from any of the urban varieties.

The Sunderland speakers, therefore, demonstrated some linguistic awareness of dialect variation not only *within* the City of Sunderland, but also *across* the North-east. Perceptions of variation across the region seemed to point to the existence of five main dialect varieties: Tyneside, Wearside, Durham, Teesside and Northumbrian.

5.2.3 Perception of difference in Sunderland

In contrast with the previous two questions, question 3 in the IdQ required the informants to consider their local dialect more closely and explain what specific features (if any) distinguish it from the dialects or nearby cities like Newcastle or Durham. It is worth noting here, though, that accounts of difference in this question focused mostly on TE. In general, the informants often found it hard to explain with some level of detail and accuracy, what it is that makes Sunde different from those varieties.⁷ The following is an example of the kind of explanation they often provided:

<OF13> I think a lot of it (¿just?) is the inflection in the voice. Not always the words that they use.

<L> Uh-huh.

<OM12> Yes, it's the sound.

<OF13> (¿It's mad?). It's a- it's the sound a lot of the time. Eh there is something which I wrote down which, like I would say "where've you been?"

<L> Yeah.

<OF13> and they would say: "where you been?"

⁷ Informants seemed to struggle even more when trying to answer this question in writing in the actual questionnaire, which is why this question was discussed at some length in the interviews. This section will mostly consider the answers provided during the interviews.

<L> Uh-huh.
 <OF13> They wouldn't. They'd just miss out " 've". They always "where", "where you been?"
 <L> Yeah.
 <OF13> Eh. And I think it's more some small inflection in the voice.
 <OM12> Yes, [XX].
 <OF13> Maybe one or two words different.

(Interview 6, part 2 (40:32 – 41:13))

This older female was acknowledging the difference between SundE and TE but, despite all her attempts to imitate the Geordie accent, she struggled to explain exactly what it was that sounded different. Both OF13 and her husband, OM12, referred to the 'inflection' of the voice as the principal distinctive factor: by inflection probably meaning intonation. This became clearer later on in the interview when they actually characterised SundE and DuE as having 'a much flatter sound' than TE, which for them 'goes up and down'.⁸

Many other speakers picked upon the general sound of the accents too (what they sound like), but, in doing so, they generally came up with rather subjective judgements which lacked linguistic detail. Some (e.g. YM02 and OM07) explained that the Geordie accent sounds much broader than the Sunderland one but were unable to elaborate on this, which is interesting since precisely the opposite point was made by some of the TLS informants, as we can see in the following extract from the NECTE corpus:

[TLS/G01]	Yes, you can tell where they come from. I was wondering whether you can even just among Tynesiders you know, if you could tell something about different Tynesiders from the way they talk. I mean.
[TLS/G54]	Oh you can er -- - the Sunderland lot people.
[TLS/G01]	Aye.
[TLS/G54]	Speak a broader Tyneside than what we speak

Others assigned the differences to the speed of speech. For example, YF09 thought that 'Newcastle and Durham people speak much faster' (IdQ 3) and MF26 that in Sunderland they 'talk slower and more pronounced' (IdQ 3).

All of these descriptions were rather vague and subjective and not really based on any specific linguistic features. Some speakers, however, did try to provide more objective (yet, still rather unspecific) explanations of what the regional varieties sound like. For example, with respect to DuE, MM14 argued that 'in Co. Durham they

⁸ Interview 13, part 2 (40:20 – 44:45)

sound more like North Yorkshire ('Mark' would be 'Moak')' (IdQ 3) and MM19 that DuE 'has got a lot more in common with the Sunderland accent', due to the fact that 'Sunderland used to be in County Durham'.⁹ Similarly, OM12 claimed that 'Sunderland is akin to Durham, and possibly Newcastle to Northumberland' (IdQ 3).

In spite of these general responses, quite a few specific linguistic features which, according to the Sunderland informants, distinguish SundE from other regional varieties were also elicited in question 3. Section 5.2.3.1 turns to list and consider these responses.

5.2.3.1 VOCALIC DIFFERENCES

(a) MOON VS 'MOUN'

One frequently identified difference between SundE and TE was the vowel quality in words like *moon*, *spoon*, *boot*, and *school*. Whereas Geordies would pronounce them with a [u:] vowel, e.g. [mu:n] and [spu:n], in SundE they would use a diphthong or near diphthong, [əu] or [ɞu], that is [məun ~ mɞun] and [spɞun ~ spəun], or even [ʊ] according to MM19. This feature was mostly cited by speakers in the middle-aged and older groups, with only one younger male (YM43) referring to it in the interview as 'one of the big ones [differences]'.¹⁰ The following extract, which contains the explanation provided by OM10 (a seventy-one-year-old man from Sunderland) and his wife who was from Tyneside, reflects the same concern for the spelling of this regional difference:¹¹

<OF11> All our friends are Tynesiders.

<OM10> They always say to me 'spoon' say 'spoon' [mɞun] and 'moon' [spɞun].

<L> @

<OM10> Because she says "moon" [mu:n].

<OF11> You see, I couldn't write that down when [ɿI am?] about the differences in the dialect because how do you put that down. Otherwise, I'd say, we'd spell it M-O-U-N. I think you would. I say "moon" [mu:n], "look at the moon", and he says "look at the moon" [mɞun].

(Interview 5 – 72:23ff)

⁹ Interview 10 (47:10 – 47:20).

¹⁰ It was cited by YM43, MF23, MF32, MM03, MM19, OF17, OF37 and OM10.

¹¹ Since OF11 was originally from Tyneside, she was excluded from the analysis.

Both the diphthong variant and a more fronted variant of /u:/, namely [ʊ], appear to display a widespread distribution today. Fronted and diphthongal variants ([ʊ] or [ʊʊ]) have been reported to be the characteristic pronunciation of the vowel of this lexical set in contemporary RP (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2005: 50). However, they have been also reported in areas of the North-west of England and in London (Wells 1982: 359; Jones 1950: 42; Torgersen Kerswill and Fox 2007). Wells (1982: 359) identifies [əʊ] as characteristic of some urban varieties, e.g. Birmingham, and of the rural accents of the Yorkshire Dales and Dentdale.

This feature will be explored in more detail in chapter 8.

(b) 'TOON' VS TOWN

The stereotypical Tyneside pronunciation of the words *town* and *down* as [tu:n] and [du:n], respectively, was also acknowledged by speakers from all three age-groups,¹² especially in connection to the expression *gannin' doon the toon*. In Sunderland, however, they indicated that they would say [taun] and [daun]. This traditional feature was exclusively associated with these two lexical items.

The retention of the ME monophthong /u:/ in words such as *mouth* and *house* was a traditional feature of dialects to the north of a line running across from Cumbria to Humberside (to the south of this boundary, this monophthong diphthongised into /aʊ/ as a result of the Great Vowel Shift). Like the monophthongal variant in PRICE, unshifted /u:/ has drastically receded in modern dialects of this area (Wells 1982: 375-376). Nowadays, words in this lexical set in Tyneside are realised mostly with [aʊ] or the more supra-local northern diphthong [ɛʊ ~ ɛʏ].¹³ The traditional [u:] is not so common any more and, according to Watt and Milroy (1999: 29), it is now confined

¹² YM34, YF35, YF36, MM03, OM10, OM27 and OM31.

¹³ According to Watt and Milroy these variants are more typical of female speakers in Tyneside.

NB: They are present in the Sunderland sample (e.g. MF23, MF32 (Interview 17 - 54:27)).

to the speech of WC males. Beal (1993b, 1999), however, suggests that [u:] has lexicalised in certain lexical items that are closely associated with the local ‘Geordie’ culture: e.g. *Toon* (StE *town* – used to refer to Newcastle and its football team), *broon* (for the *Newcastle Brown Ale*), *oot* and *doon* (in the expressions *a neet oot with the lasses*, ‘a night out with the girls’ and *doon the toon*). Moreover, this monophthongal variant tends to be used when ‘performing’ the Tyneside dialect. It is a feature that today has become enregistered (see section 2.2) as an element of the ‘Geordie’ accent, i.e. a linguistic stereotype which is part of people’s linguistic knowledge and awareness and ideologically linked to Tyneside. People are able to consciously use this feature in attempts to emphasise or display their membership or affiliation to the local community.

(c) HEATON VS ‘HEITON’

A few informants, all in the middle-aged group, also believed that there is a difference in the way Tyneside and Wearside people pronounce the FLEECE vowel.¹⁴ In contrast with the SundE vowel, the TE vowel in words like *feet*, *quayside* and *Heaton* seemed to be perceived as a longer variant. MM03, for example, explained: ‘we would say *feet* [fit] [...] they would say *feet* [fi:t]’ [*My transcription*].¹⁵ He produced a longer vowel in the TE version. However, in the IdQ MM14 seemed to represent the SundE variant as a diphthong: ‘in Newcastle ‘Heaton’ would be ‘Heaton’ rather than ‘Heiton’ as in S/land’. This would suggest a [ei] or maybe even a [ɪi] realisation in Sunderland.

(d) ‘MAK’ AND ‘TAK’

The stereotypical traditional Sunderland pronunciation of the verbs *make* and *take* as [mak] and [tak] was also occasionally highlighted by some in order to explain the origin of the *Mackem* label. By contrast, the TE pronunciation was identified as being [mɪ^ək ~ mek] and [tɪ^ək ~ tek] respectively.

¹⁴ MM03, MM14, MM19 and MF23.

¹⁵ Interview 2 (60:55 – 60:59).

Although the verbs *make* and *take* belong to the FACE lexical set, traditionally these two verbs were realised as [mɛk] and [tɛk] in Tyneside and Northumberland, and [mak] and [tak] in County Durham, which explains the origin of the *Mackem* label (Beal 1993b).¹⁶

Kerswill (1986) suggests that [mak] and [tak] in County Durham may be the result of lexical variation. In his research in this area, Kerswill observed that speakers used [a] in more informal styles, whereas in formal registers the general northern monophthongal variant of the FACE vowel, i.e. [e:], was more frequent.

(e) WALK

The difference between SundE and TE in the pronunciation of words such as *walk* and *football*, where <a> is followed by an <l>, was also cited occasionally,¹⁷ pointing that in Newcastle they would realise these words with [a:].

In Tyneside and Northumberland words from the THOUGHT set which are spelt with <a> (e.g. *all*, *walk*, *ball*, *small*) are generally realised with [ɔ:] – the RP variant – however, the traditional front low variant [a:] may be occasionally used by WC speakers (Beal 1993b; Watt and Milroy 1999: 28). This traditional variant may also be heard in some lexical items from the GOAT set, namely *know*, *cold* and *old*.¹⁸

(f) ‘CUK’ VS ‘COOK’

In the IdQ, MF32 indicated that the word *cook* from the FOOT lexical set was realised with a long, back vowel [u:] in Sunderland, whereas in Newcastle they would realise it with [ʊ]. Whilst she did explain this in the interview, in the questionnaire she represented this vocalic difference by adding an extra <o> in *cook*:

¹⁶ See section 4.2.1 for a full explanation of this label.

¹⁷ It was only cited by MM19, OM12 and OF13.

¹⁸ Many of the Sunderland informants explained in the course of the interview that the typical local pronunciation of the word *cold* was [ka:d]. They usually referred to it in connection to the local story “The Cauld Lad of Hylton”.

People in Newcastle say instead of ‘cook’, ‘cuk’, we [Sunderland people] say ‘*coook*’
[My emphasis] (MF32 – IdQ 3).

Interestingly, some of Llamas’ (2001) Middlesbrough informants also referred to the long back vowel as their local variant in words such as *book* and *cook*.

(g) LETTER AND COMMA

Differences in the realisation of the final unstressed vowels in these lexical sets were not explicitly mentioned but did come up when two of the middle-aged males (MM03 and MM19) were trying to demonstrate that the words *computer* and *motor* are pronounced differently in Tyneside and Sunderland by imitating the two accents. MM03 claimed that the word *motor* in SundE would be [‘moutə] and in TE [mø:ʔ̩a],¹⁹ and MM19 argued that *computer* would be realised as [kəm’pju:ʔ̩a] in Tyneside and [kəm’pju:rə] in Sunderland.²⁰ In the production of their respective lexical examples, they both showed the same vocalic contrast in the word final unstressed vowels: [ə] in SundE and [e] in TE.²¹ Whilst no explicit comment was made pointing specifically to the difference in the quality of the unstressed vowel, the variant they used in the imitation of the TE accent is precisely the one Wells (1982) and Watt and Milroy (1999) reported to be characteristic amongst Tyneside speakers, especially older and/or WC. Nevertheless, they indicate that the vowel in both of them can also be realised as a further front variant [ɛ].²²

¹⁹ Interview 2 (61:13 ff).

²⁰ Interview 10 (52:17 – 52:19).

²¹ Note that both speakers realised the Tyneside variant of the word with a glottalised (t), glottalised variants will be introduced in section 5.2.3.2, and then analysed in detail in chapter 7. MM03 also used a central unrounded monophthong [ə:] for the TE realisation but not for the SundE one, this is discussed in the following section (h).

²² This variant can be heard in some of the female Sunderland speakers (e.g. MF23 (Interview 12) – *supervisor* [ɛ] (24:35) and *gaffa* [ɛ] (24:55)).

(h) GOAT

In the attempt to demonstrate the typical Tyneside and Sunderland pronunciation of the word *motor* discussed above (LETTER and COMMA), a second vocalic difference was implicitly suggested by MM03 which related to the quality of the stressed vowel – the GOAT vowel. Whereas he produced a diphthongal variant [Oʊ] in the Sunderland version, he produced the central unrounded monophthong [ə:] in the Tyneside version, which Watt (2000, 2002) found to be mostly confined to the speech of male speakers. It is interesting to note, however, that MM03 did not produce either the pan-northern monophthong [o:] or the localised centring diphthong [ʊə] to characterise any of the two North-eastern accents.

5.2.3.2 CONSONANTAL DIFFERENCES

Only two consonantal differences between the Tyneside and Sunderland accents were mentioned by the Sunderland informants. Firstly, some picked on the realisation of word-initial <h>: whereas in Sunderland they would drop their aitches, e.g. [aus] for *house*, in Tyneside they would retain them, e.g. [haus]. This is a well-known marker of difference between the two communities (Beal 2000a: 368)). However, this feature was only identified by middle-aged and older informants.

Retention of word-initial /h/ is one of the accent features that, according to Trudgill (1990), is diagnostic of the traditional and modern North-eastern varieties and distinguishes them from others further to the south and west. Watt and Milroy (1999) present TE as one of the few remaining urban varieties that retain /h/ word-initially. Yet, to date, no systematic analysis of this variable has been conducted in any of the North-eastern urban varieties,²³ and the only existing evidence from rural areas is the SED data, which actually presents County Durham as an area where /h/-loss is highly variable. Since this is popularly regarded in the North-east as one of the

²³ The only two exceptions here are Darlington where usage of (h) has recently been studied by Atkinson (forthcoming) and the present Sunderland study.

accent features that distinguish speakers from Sunderland and Tyneside, (h) will be examined in detail in chapter 6.

The second consonantal difference concerned the pronunciation of intervocalic <t>. This difference was only suggested by the middle-aged males, MM03 and MM19 in their imitation of the Tyneside and Sunderland accents in the words *motor* and *computer*, discussed at the end of section 5.2.3.1. As was the case with the two vocalic differences reflected in these imitations, neither MM03 nor MM19 gave an explicit explanation of the difference in the pronunciation of <t> in the two varieties. In his attempt to reproduce and contrast the two pronunciations of the word *motor*, MM03 realised the word with a clear fully released stop for Sunde ([t]) and with a pre-glottalised variant for TE ([ʔt]), that is, [ˈmoutə] and [mø:ʔta] respectively,²⁴ MM19 also produced a pre-glottalised intervocalic (t) ([ʔt]) in the word *computer*, i.e. [kəmˈpju:ʔta], when imitating the Tyneside accent, yet produced a tapped variant [r], i.e. [kəmˈpju:rə], when imitating the Sunderland accent.²⁵ Thus, whereas they both agreed in that Tynesiders would use pre-glottalised variants for intervocalic (t), their realisations of *motor* and *computer* imitating the Sunderland accent suggested that in this variety intervocalic (t) would be realised as either [t] or [r].

Surprisingly, however, MF40, who was excluded from the sample analysed in this study (cf. section 3.4), referred to the fact that people in London seemed to regard the glottal stop as a typical feature of the North-eastern varieties, even though this feature is also typically found in London English:

<MF40> When I was in London people- all my friends would say Paula say ‘ta-ra’ or say you know tell you about- say “bottle of pop” because we got that glottal stop [XX]
<L> Yeah.

<MF40> And they used to just fall about laughing about “bottle of pop”
(Interview 21 (17:51 – 18:01))

In this explanation MM40 produced a clear glottal stop variant in *bottle*.

²⁴ Interview 2 (61:13 ff).

²⁵ Interview 10 (52:17 – 52:19).

Usage of the glottal stop as a variant of (t) before syllabic /l/ (e.g. *little, bottle*) is an attested characteristic of TE. In such position it has been found to be categorical in all age groups (Watt and Milroy 1999: 29-30). Usage of [ʔ] in (i) non-initial prevocalic position and (ii) word-final position before another consonant or prepausally is one of the consonantal features that have been spreading rapidly around Britain in the 20th century as a result of a general process of geographical diffusion²⁶ (cf. studies in Foulkes and Docherty 1999).²⁷ In TE, whilst [ʔ] has accordingly been found to be increasingly characteristic of the speech of younger speakers (mainly MC females) in non-initial prevocalic position, the use of glottal variants seems to be inhibited prepausally. Here, fully released [t] is used, although [ʔ] seems to be making some inroads in tag questions before pauses. Glottal replacement of (p) and (k) intervocalically has also been found in this variety, albeit very infrequently, in the PVC sample.

In TE, (p), (t) and (k) may also be realised as glottally reinforced (or glottalised) variants – [ʔp̄, ʔt̄, ʔk̄] respectively – in syllable-initial intersonorant position, e.g. *deeper, twenty, sulky*. This distinguishes TE from other British varieties. However, analysis of the PVC corpus has demonstrated that glottal reinforced variants of (p) are more frequent than (t) or (k) both in males and females; yet, in (t) more so than in (k) (Docherty *et al.* 1997: 301). Glottalised variants are more characteristic of the speech of older male speakers.

As we will see in chapter 7, usage of glottal(ised) variants of (p), (t) and (k) is not exclusive to Tyneside, it has also been attested in other North-eastern varieties: e.g. in DuE (Kerswill 1987), MbE (Llamas 2001) and Darlington (Atkinson, forthcoming).

²⁶ Note here that studies of glottalling and glottalisation in the past have referred to this process whereby a number of consonantal features have spread around the country as ‘accent levelling’ (e.g. Foulkes and Docherty 2000). However, I follow Kerswill (2003) in distinguishing between two different types of change: *geographical diffusion*, as a process whereby ‘features spread out from a populous and economically and culturally dominant centre’ and *levelling* as ‘the reduction of attrition of marked variants’ (Trudgill (1986: 38) cited in Kerswill 2003).

²⁷ Th-fronting and the substitution of labiodental or bilabial approximant – [ʋ] or [β] – for /r/ are two other examples.

5.2.3.3 GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENCES

There also seem to be a number of grammatical features that distinguish SundE and TE which are evident for Sunderland people. Although none of the following chapters will analyse any morpho-syntactic features of the Sunderland dialect, the most frequently identified differences will be briefly listed in this section, not just to demonstrate that the speakers were able to identify some of these, but also to show that they only seemed to pick upon grammatical/function words rather than syntactic structures.²⁸

(a) 'DIVVENT' VS 'DINNET'

The most frequently cited grammatical feature (with two thirds of the speakers referring to it at some point during the interview) was the use of *divvent* as a negative form of the auxiliary verb *do* in TE and *dinnet*, *dint* or *dinna* in SundE.²⁹ Some argued that they would not use *divvent* due to the fact that it is a 'Geordie' marker. Two of the middle-aged males (MM14 and MM28), however, argued that both *dinnet* and *divvent* would be heard in Sunderland. MM14, in particular, pointed out that although people would tend to say that *divvent* is more TE, 'in actual fact it's used, it's used, you can hear it in pubs' in Sunderland.³⁰

The use of different negative forms of the AUXILIARY *DO* in TE and SundE – *divvent* in the former and *dinnet* in the latter – has been previously attested (Beal (1993a: 192); Burbano (2001: 119)). These two different forms, which are probably the fossilisation of the local pronunciations of the standard negative *don't*, were recorded in the SED. In this survey, *divvent* showed a larger distribution which covered all of Northumberland, most of Cumbria and Durham. *Dinnet*, by contrast, was only rarely recorded. It was not even recorded in Washington, where due to its proximity to Sunderland this variant may have been expected. The use of *dinnet* as a local Wearside form, however, seems to be a feature which many locals are aware of and use (e.g. OM07 used it in the interview in 'I'm a Wearsider but I *dinnet* mind being call Mackem'³¹). The fact that this feature demonstrates such a high level of awareness in the community may be indicative that this feature has been enregistered

²⁸ The morpho-syntactic features of the Sunderland dialect will be examined in future research.

²⁹ Some speakers argued that it is either *dint* or *dinna* rather than *dinnet*.

³⁰ Interview 7 (63:07 – 64:16).

³¹ Interview 4, part 2 (17:45 – 17:55).

in Sunderland as a marker of the local dialect (this, however, will be the focus of future research).³²

(b) 'OWER' VS 'WOR'

The second most frequently identified grammatical difference between SundE and TE, with half of the speakers mentioning it, was related to the forms of the first person plural possessive pronoun *our*. Previous dialect studies on TE and NbE have recorded *wor* as the first person plural personal pronoun (Beal 1993a, and NECTE 2005). In order to see how Sunderland speakers reacted to this form, *wor* was included in one of the sentences of the Sunderland grammar questionnaire. The most common response to this was that *wor* is definitely not a local feature and thus they listed this difference amongst their responses to IdQ question 3. They generally agreed that *wor* is a 'Geordie' feature and clarified that in Sunderland they would say *ower* [awa] instead.

The following extract from one of the interviews shows this. Here, two middle-aged speakers commented on sentence 6 of the language questionnaire:

- <MM28> And er, number six, 'wor'.
<MM29> @
<MM28> That is like, that's an insult that.
<MM29> Yeah.
<L> @
<MM28> 'Wor' is definitely Newcastle.
<MM29> Yeah.
<L> Right.
<MM29> Aye.
<MM28> We, we would have. They'll pronounce a single syllable 'wor' [wɔ:],
<L> Uh-huh.
<MM28> and we pronounce it "ower" [awa]. Two syllable.
<L> Right. Uh-huh.
<MM28> It's a completely different word.
<MM29> Aye. I've written that down. "Ower" would be used not 'wor', definite. Nobody have, not a tick in that box at all.
<L> Right.
<MM28> If you, if you used the word 'wor' in a pub in Sunderland,
<MM29> Aye.
<MM28> then, you-- you would like be noticed as being an outsider.
<MM29> I mean that that
<L> Yeah.
<MM29> that would be a big noticeable difference between Newcastle and Sunderland.
<L> Right.
<MM28> 'Wor' and 'ower', yeah. [--]
<MM29> You would say. If in Newcastle you'd say 'wor lass',

³² See section 2.2 for a definition and discussion of the term *enregistration*.

<L> Uh-huh.
<MM29> and here you'd say 'ower lass'.
<L> Alright, yeah, uh-huh.
<MM29> That'd be.
<MM28> That's one of them.
<MM29> It's big demarcation that one.

(Interview 15, part 2 (01:05 – 01:46))

(c) *THOU/THEE VS YOU*

One of the few features that the Sunderland informants thought would distinguish their local dialect from the varieties from County Durham was the use of *thou/thee* for *you*. These forms were mentioned mostly by older and middle-aged speakers,³³ and they generally associated them with the Durham colliery or defined it as part of the 'pit talk' characteristic of the area.³⁴ This was supported by MM20 who argued that these forms could be heard in Hetton and Houghton:

Even as far as Houghton and Hetton in Durham they'd say—they'd use expressions like *thee* and *thou* (MM20 – Interview 10 (47:00 – 47:06)).

(d) 'GEET' VS 'GIT'

The last feature in this section could probably be classed as a pronunciation feature rather than a grammatical one. It relates to the intensifier *geet* (as in 'Oh, I'm git chuffed'³⁵), which Beal (1993a: 210) suggests could be possibly unique to TE. Whilst the etymology of this intensifier is not clear, Beal argues it could potentially derive from the Scottish intensifier *gey* as in 'It's gey dreich the day' and ultimately from French (Beal 1993a: 210).

Like *wor*, *geet* was also included in one of the sentences of the Sunderland grammatical questionnaire and once again the reactions to it were interesting. To start with, it was widely acknowledged as a word that would be used locally in Sunderland. It was not alien to any of the speakers. However, some of them seemed to disagree with the way in which it was spelt in the questionnaire as it did not reflect the Sunderland pronunciation but the Tyneside one, i.e. [gi:t ~ gi:ʔ]. In Sunderland, they

³³ In particular they were cited by MM20, OM07, OF08 and OM12. YM34 was the only young speaker who referred to it as an 'old' form.

³⁴ Note that traditionally the archaic second person singular pronoun *thou* was used in County Durham, as attested in the SED.

³⁵ Example provided by OF13 (Interview 6, (part 1 (36:20))).

argued, they would write it *git* because they pronounce it [gɪt ~ gɪʔ].³⁶ The intensifier was, as a result, also cited in IdQ question 3 as a feature that would distinguish the Sunderland and Tyneside dialects.

5.2.4 Linguistic awareness in sociolinguistics

Overall, it became evident, not only from the responses to question 3 from the IdQ but in general throughout the interview discussions, that the most easily recognisable differences between the Sunderland dialect and other regional varieties (namely TE and DuE) were mainly grammatical/function words (e.g. *dinnet* vs. *divvent*, *wor* vs. *ower*) and to some extent accent features (especially vocalic ones) (e.g. */h/-dropping*, *toon* vs. *town*, [mak] and [tak] for *make* and *take*, etc), rather than syntactic structures.³⁷ Many of the features discussed in the previous section have received attention from past dialect studies conducted in the North-east to a greater or lesser extent, often due to their long-standing status as popular markers or stereotypes of some of these varieties (e.g. the HOUSE vowel and the use of glottal(ised) variants of /t/ have been frequently examined in studies of TE). It was interesting to note, however, that even though the vast majority of the Sunderland participants admitted that SundE is indeed different from other regional varieties, some struggled more than others to explain what these differences were. This was the case especially with the younger age group in the identification of accent features. Furthermore, in some of the features that were identified as characteristic of SundE, there was noticeable variation in the level of linguistic awareness shown by the speakers. For example, whilst the use of *dinnet* was widely recognised as a SundE feature by more than half of the informants, the stereotypical traditional [mak] and [tak] pronunciation for *make* and *take*, which motivated the appearance of the label *Mackem*, was only occasionally mentioned (yet, never by the youngest age-group).

³⁶ This was suggested by YF05, YM33, MM14, MM28, MF32 and OM07 in the interview.

³⁷ The lexical data collected was not analysed for the purposes of this study. However, the high frequency of some lexical items elicited suggests that, in line with Burbano (2001)'s findings, items such as *doll off* or *play the doll* ('play truant') and *kets* (for 'sweets') appear to be localised variants that distinguish SundE from TE.

This lends some support to Labov's argument that non-linguists have only got a limited linguistic awareness. However, as Preston (1996) indicates, awareness has only played a minor role in sociolinguistic studies. Typically, awareness in the Labovian paradigm has been addressed as 'attention paid to speech' in order to study stylistic variation. Thus, Labov (1994, 2001) suggests that *changes from above* (the level of consciousness) involve a high level of social awareness and, therefore, exhibit clear patterns of style shift. An example would be the (ing) variable in which we find that [ɪŋ] is characteristic of monitored, formal speech and [ɪn] of more unmonitored informal registers. By contrast, in *changes from below*, Labov distinguishes three steps and therefore three types of variables depending on the degree of social awareness. Firstly, variables start as *indicators* which may display clear patterns of social or regional stratification, yet no sign of social awareness. Once these variables become part of the social awareness, they turn into *markers*, which are not only socially stratified but also show stylistic variation and carry some social stigma. Finally, *stereotypes* differ from markers in that they are very stigmatised and are thus even more likely to be the object of social comment and are subject to patterns of hypercorrection. Self-report tests have demonstrated that usually speakers are unaware of their use of these stigmatised variants (Labov 2001:197).

Preston (1996) argues that Labov does not interpret 'attention to speech' as an awareness of linguistic features. As he explains,

[t]his must be the case, for respondents who are evidencing the influence of 'change from below' [...] do so with increasing frequency (generally for prestige forms) of the use of just such variables precisely in the elicitation environments which trigger greater attention to speech (e.g. word lists and reading passages). Attention to speech may be, therefore, [...] a 'global' concern that does not require overt knowledge of a linguistic 'detail' to be effective (1996: 72-73)

Nevertheless, as we have seen in this chapter, speakers do have some overt knowledge of linguistic detail. Speakers from different areas are likely to have different mental maps of dialect areas and this must be explained by the degree of familiarity they have with each of those areas, or, in other words, the access they have to linguistic detail. Unlike speakers from outside the North-east who tend to class all North-eastern varieties as 'Geordie' (Montgomery 2005a), the Sunderland speakers' demonstrated a clear awareness of language variation within the North-east by identifying other local or regional varieties which they perceive as different from their own. That is, the

community defines itself not only by describing its own linguistic features and delimiting its boundaries but also by defining 'the Other'.

Moreover, it is evident that the level of conscious linguistic knowledge varies from one individual to another, which would explain why some were able to discuss more specific language features than others. Nonetheless, inability to comment on language detail did not seem to interfere with their ability to identify different dialect varieties within the North-east, which supports Preston's belief that 'a simple on-off characterisation of non-linguists' awareness of language (or evidence of 'knowledge' at any level of awareness) cannot be made' (1996: 40). Rather, it may be more appropriate, he proposes, to speak of 'modes of folk-linguistic awareness' and thus view non-linguists' perceptions of linguistic facts along four independent clines:

1. *Availability* – This refers to the speakers' ability to perceive and comment on linguistic features – what they know about language. Whereas some will be able to notice and discuss certain features, other speakers may be completely oblivious to these same features and therefore will not comment on them.
2. *Accuracy* – That is, how accurately they are able to describe linguistic facts and their distribution.
3. *Detail* – This refers to the level of specificity in which they can discuss a linguistic object. For example, we have seen that whereas some of the Sunderland informants were able to pick up on specific local dialect features (detailed explanations), others for whom such features were unavailable still described their variety in more general terms (global explanations).
4. *Control* – This refers to non-linguists' ability to imitate (i.e. control) linguistic features or varieties.

In the light of this, an individual may be able to identify and discuss a particular variety and may also be able to imitate it rather faithfully, but may not have any overt knowledge of the specific linguistic features that characterise it. Others, by contrast, may have a more detailed knowledge of its specific features, but may not be able to imitate it at all. For example, among the Sunderland informants there were some who were able to specifically mention features of the local variety (e.g. glottalisation or

/h/-dropping). By contrast, sometimes in their imitation of the Sunderland and Tyneside accents, others accurately produced the way in which a particular variant would be realised in Sunderland and Tyneside, yet they did not explicitly mention these features e.g. the unstressed vowel in LETTER.

Thus, even though some of the Sunderland informants were only able to provide more global and unspecific characterisations of their variety than others who had access to more linguistic detail, they were all able to identify and comment on this variety, which demonstrates that they have different modes of awareness. The Sunderland dialect, therefore, is a reality for them, and, as suggested at the beginning of section 5.2, it is a reality that carries a heavy ideological load. Also, all those linguistic features that were cited by the speakers as central for the recognition of the Sunderland dialect were clearly loaded with a local ideological tinge: they were presented as items that index either affiliation or, at the very least, membership of this speech community. For this reason, some of these overtly-acknowledged local linguistic features were selected as the linguistic variables to be analysed in this study.

The first one was (h) since in Tyne and Wear /h/-dropping is popularly considered a distinctive marker of Sunderland speech, whereas /h/-full realisations are seen as characteristic of TE. Given that this local marker was cited by some of the Sunderland middle-aged and older speakers and that, in the past, dialect studies seem to have disagreed over whether County Durham is an /h/-dropping area or not, I decided it would be interesting to ascertain whether in fact this is a feature that characterises the Sunderland accent.

The second variable selected was (t). Glottal variants of (t) were not frequently cited by my informants, and those few who more or less explicitly made reference to these did not seem to agree over whether these are typical of the Sunderland accent or not (see section 5.2.3.2). Nevertheless, the usage of glottalised variants of (p), (t) and (k) is a very salient marker of TE, and they have also been attested in other North-eastern localities (e.g. Durham, Northumberland and Teesside). Because of this, it seemed advisable to analyse these three variables in the Sunderland study in order to ascertain whether they are also found in SundE or not and, if they are, ascertain whether sociolinguistic trends which point to a decrease in use of the localised

preglottalised variants identified in other North-eastern locations are mirrored in Sunderland. Besides, the use of the glottal stop for (t) has been identified as one of the consonantal features involved in a national process of geographical diffusion so an examination of this variable would shed some light on whether Sunderland is following the rest of the country in this diffusion process.

The last variable chosen was the GOOSE vowel since the pronunciation of the vowel in *moon*, *school* and *spoon* was the most frequently cited vocalic feature that according to the Sunderland speakers distinguish TE and SundE.

Overall, then, three very different types of variables were selected. The analysis of (h) and the GOOSE vowel, in particular, would provide an opportunity to determine to what extent folk-linguistic perceptions have any bearing on speakers' actual linguistic usage. From what has been discussed above, and what we will discuss in chapter 6, /h/-dropping, as a marker of Sunderland speech, has been overtly commented upon by Geordies and Mackems for a while, which suggests that this may be one of the features that distinguishes one variety from the other. Moreover, variation in the use of (h) is a phenomenon that is noticed and commented upon by speakers not just in the North-east of England but in Britain in general due to the fact that /h/-dropping is a highly stigmatised feature in BrE. It is arguably a part of British people's linguistic awareness and, as we will see in chapter 6, presents patterns of social and stylistic variation. On the other hand, whilst speakers seemed to be aware of some kind of variation in the realisation of the GOOSE vowel, this variable is probably at a different level of awareness and, thus, not involved in stylistic variation (this variable will be examined in chapter 8). Finally, the fact that the use of glottalisation of (p), (t) and (k) (chapter 7) was not explicitly mentioned by any of the Sunderland informants may indicate that North-eastern speakers are unaware that they use it. These differences in level of awareness between the variables made it interesting to determine what kind of social variation would be found in the Sunderland sample.

The three chapters that follow will be structured along similar lines: each will provide a history of a linguistic variable accompanied by a literature review; this will be followed by the presentation of the data and analysis; and finally a summary will discuss the function of these variables within the Sunderland community.