

“Why should I talk proper?”:
Critiquing the requirement for spoken standard English
in English secondary schools

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between identity and the linguistic style used by adolescent pupils during classroom presentations, with a focus on working-class pupils. It was prompted by the requirement in the education system for pupils to speak standard English, a requirement felt by some to be socially biased against working-class pupils who are more likely to have nonstandard speech features.

Seventy-six pupils were withdrawn from their English classes (in friendship groups of three) to take part in the study. They were recorded making a series of one-minute presentations in two conditions: when playing a role and when speaking as themselves. They completed questionnaires designed to generate social profiles. Presentations were transcribed and phonetic, lexico-grammatical and para-linguistic variables (eg formal v informal) were marked. Correlations were sought between linguistic variables and a range of social factors: the two presentation conditions, social profiles, social class backgrounds and genders. These were explored in more depth using qualitative analysis methods.

The results showed that identity had a strong impact on the linguistic choices pupils made: when working-class pupils were speaking as themselves they used more localised and informal linguistic variants; conversely, when they were playing a role they were able to adopt a wider range of linguistic features. I hypothesise that this is because when pupils are speaking as themselves they are under pressure to maintain an authentic identity and their linguistic style must be congruent with their background. Furthermore, pupils were found to signal the attitudes they held through their linguistic style.

The findings contribute to our understanding of the impact of identity on linguistic style. They also suggest that the educational focus on the narrow issue of standardness misses important issues of identity construction which are more salient in showing how adolescents perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

List of Contents

Abstract	ii
List of Contents	iii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	x
Preface.....	xii
Acknowledgements.....	xiv
Author’s Declaration.....	xvi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
1.1. Overview	2
1.2 The Great Grammar Crusade	3
1.3 The case for the Requirement	8
1.4 The case against the Requirement.....	12
1.4.1 Linguistically viable?.....	12
1.4.2 Socially effective?.....	20
1.5 Research questions.....	26
1.6 Summary	28
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL FAILURE; FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS	30
2.1 Educational failure?	30
2.2 The ‘aspiration imperative’	32
2.3 The ‘boys problem’	34
2.4 Bottom-up social factors: home culture and communities	38
2.5 Bottom up social factors: adolescent peer groups and friendship groups....	43
2.6 Pupils’ self esteem	49
2.7 Conclusion of discussion	53
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL METHODOLOGY.....	56
3.1 Overview of Method	56
3.2 Social Constructionism	58
3.3 Theories of identity	60
3.3.1 Language and identities	64
3.3.2 ‘Meaning-making’	71
3.3.3 Voicing and loading.....	74

3.4	Conclusion of discussion	76
CHAPTER 4: QUESTIONNAIRE AND SPEECH ELICITATION DESIGN.....		79
4.1	Mixed methods.....	79
4.2	Developing the questionnaires	82
4.2.1	Social indices and Likert scales	83
4.2.2	Attitude measurement	89
4.2.3	Developing the indices and the statements	92
4.2.4	The statements	95
4.2.5	Other questions	104
4.3	Speech elicitation tasks	108
4.3.1	SGD (Small Group Discussion).....	110
4.3.2	Presentations	113
4.4	Conclusions.....	123
CHAPTER 5: PLANNING AND RUNNING THE SESSIONS		127
5.1	Planning the sessions	127
5.1.1	Pupil engagement.....	130
5.1.2	Structure of the sessions.....	131
5.1.3	Ethics.....	132
5.2	The schools	133
5.2.1	Shadow High.....	134
5.2.2	Mill Town High	135
5.2.3	Valley Wide High	136
5.2.4	Pennine High.....	137
5.2.5	My status in the schools	138
5.3	Technical and people issues.....	140
5.4	Critique of the sessions	143
5.5	Coding the features	145
5.5.1	Salient accent features.....	147
5.5.2	Non Standard Grammar (NSG)	153
5.5.3	DAR and <i>were-for-was</i>	156
5.5.4	<i>Like-DM</i>	157
5.5.5	Nonstandard intensifiers	158
5.5.6	Taboo language.....	159
5.6	Managing the data.....	161

5.7	Conclusions.....	165
CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL MAKEUP OF THE GROUPS		167
6.1	Social class indicators	168
6.1.1	Parents' occupations	168
6.1.2	Parents' educational levels.....	170
6.1.3	Newspaper readership	171
6.2	Cultural traits	172
6.2.1	Extracurricular activities	173
6.2.2	Clubs and hobbies	175
6.2.3	Attitudes to Speech	179
6.3	Outliers.....	181
6.4	Social indices scores	183
6.4.1	Home culture.....	183
6.4.2	Community embeddedness	186
6.4.3	Friendship group culture	187
6.4.4	Attitude to school.....	189
6.4.5	Aspiration.....	190
6.5	Summary of discussion	193
CHAPTER 7: PHONETIC VARIATION		196
7.1	Open class /h/-realisation.....	196
7.2	Word-medial pre-vocalic /t/-realisation.....	202
7.3	/θ/-realisation as [θ], [v] or [f].....	207
7.4	Summary of discussion	219
CHAPTER 8: LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL VARIATION.....		223
8.1	Definite Article Reduction	223
8.2	<i>Were-for-was</i>	228
8.3	Dossing out	234
8.4	Intensifiers: <i>well</i> and <i>proper</i>	235
8.5	Taboo language	240
8.6	<i>Like-DM</i>	246
8.7	Summary of discussion	252
CHAPTER 9: BEYOND THE SENTENCE		254
9.1	Dominant approaches.....	255
9.2	Discourse Analysis.....	262

9.3	Valley Wide High	266
9.4	Mill Town boys.....	277
9.5	Mill Town girls	282
9.6	Summary of discussion	285
CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS		288
10.1	RQ1: How is linguistic variation used in the construction of social identities?	288
10.1.1	Connoting ‘localness’	289
10.1.2	‘Disaffiliation’	290
10.1.3	Discourse variation	293
10.1.4	Identity load	295
10.1.5	Summary of RQ1	298
10.2	RQ2: Who benefits from the Requirement?	301
10.2.1	Middle-class pupils	303
10.2.2	Aspirational working-class pupils.....	304
10.2.3	Disaffected working-class pupils	306
10.2.4	The ‘middle-majority’	309
10.2.5	The ‘boys problem’ revisited	311
10.2.6	Exceptions to the rules	313
10.2.7	Summary of RQ2	314
10.3	RQ3: What changes should be made, if any, to the National Curriculum in regard to the requirements for spoken SE?	316
10.3.1	Ideological standpoint	317
10.3.2	Previous researchers.....	318
10.3.3	Areas for action.....	320
10.3.4	Remaining issues	324
10.4	Final comments	327
10.4.1	Limitations	329
10.4.2	Further studies.....	332
ABBREVIATIONS		335
APPENDICES		336
Appendix A: Freedom of Information request made on 26 th July 2013		336
Appendix B: Questionnaires		339
Appendix B (i): First session questionnaire.....		339

Appendix B (ii): Second session questionnaire	340
Appendix B (iii): Back of second session questionnaire	341
Appendix B (iv): Third session questionnaire	342
Appendix B (v): Fourth session questionnaire.....	343
Appendix B (vi): Back of fourth session questionnaire.....	344
Appendix C: List of SGD prompts	345
Appendix D: Rationale for HL presentation prompt cards	346
Appendix E: Rationale for LL presentation prompt cards	350
Appendix F: Information Sheet and Consent Form	354
Appendix G: Development of Excel spreadsheet	359
Appendix H: Cleaning the data.....	368
LIST OF REFERENCES	376

List of Tables

- Table 1.1: Summary of arguments put forward in favour of prescribing spoken SE
- Table 1.2: Percent of teachers who commented on speech *content* or speech *structure*
- Table 1.3: Percent of teachers agreeing with statements
- Table 4.1: Sample definitions of “attitude” (Oskamp and Schultz, 2005: 8)
- Table 4.2: *Home culture* social index statements
- Table 4.3: *Community embeddedness* social index statements
- Table 4.4: *Attitude to school* social index statements
- Table 4.5: *Friendship group culture* social index statements
- Table 4.6: *Aspiration* social index statements
- Table 4.7: HL prompts
- Table 4.8: LL prompts
- Table 5.1: School profiles
- Table 5.2: Coding using on corpus
- Table 5.3: Breakdown of instances of NSG (features with 5 or more tokens)
- Table 6.1: Groups of pupils
- Table 6.2: Occupations of pupils’ parents
- Table 6.3: Types of clubs and hobbies listed by pupils
- Table 6.4: Hobbies talked about during HL presentation topic ‘My Hobbies’, Working-class schools only
- Table 6.5: Upper and lower quintile scores on *home culture* index
- Table 6.6: Upper and lower quintile scores on *community embeddedness* index
- Table 6.7: Upper and lower quintile scores on *friendship group culture* index
- Table 6.8: Upper and lower quintile scores on *attitude to school* index
- Table 6.9: Upper and lower quintile scores on *aspiration* index
- Table 6.10: Career/job aspirations expressed during presentation topic ‘My life in ten years’
- Table 7.1: Spearman’s rho results on social indices scores for open-class /h/-realisation
- Table 7.2: Upper and lower quintiles of pupils ranked by open-class /h/-realisation and then by scores on *attitude to school* index (HLs only)
- Table 7.3: Spearman’s rho results on social indices scores for /t/-realisation
- Table 7.4: Upper and lower quintiles of pupils ranked by word-medial prevocalic /t/-realisation and then by scores on *attitude to school* index (HLs only)
- Table 7.5: Spearman’s rho results on social indices scores for /θ/-realisation
- Table 7.6: Upper and lower quintiles of pupils ranked by /θ/-realisation and then by scores on *attitude to school* index
- Table 7.7: Year 2 compared to Year 1 for Valley Wide High pupils on phonetic and social variables
- Table 8.1: Number of tokens of *the*
- Table 8.2: Number of tokens of *was*
- Table 8.3: HL *was* realisations below 0.90
- Table 8.4: Average scores for pupils scoring over and under 0.90 for *was* realisation on social indices

- Table 8.5: % standard intensifier realisation for pupils using more than two instances of nonstandard intensifier
- Table 8.6: Pupils with more than one token of taboo language
- Table 8.7: Comparison between Elma and the rest of her group (Pennine-mid) on social indices scores
- Table 9.1: Comparison of Valley Wide boys constructing an authoritarian head teacher with those constructing an anarchic head teacher on social indices
- Table 9.2: Comparison between Rose and Wendy on social indices
- Table 12.1: Example calculation without polarity column
- Table 12.2: Example calculation including polarity column
- Table 12.3: Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test
- Table 12.4: Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient
- Table 12.5: Consistency of responses to questionnaire statements
- Table 12.6: Number of occasions where pupils scored over 5 on consistency check
- Table 12.7: Impact of omissions of erratic pupils from group data
- Table 12.8: Lowest 15 responses to statements by Standard Deviation
- Table 12.9: Variable 'outliers'

List of Figures

- Figure 4.1: Example of the way the statements were set out in the questionnaires
- Figure 4.2: Questionnaire form given to pupils to probe engagement with after-school clubs
- Figure 4.3: Examples of HL and LL prompt cards
- Figure 4.4: Illustration of one round of the presentations
- Figure 4.5: Screenshots of countdown screen and change over screen
- Figure 5.1: Venn diagram showing competing interests
- Figure 5.2: Headset microphone
- Figure 5.3: Screenshot of Audacity sound recording software
- Figure 5.4: Screenshot of ELAN transcription software
- Figure 5.5: Screenshot of Word software with headings and subheadings
- Figure 6.1: % of parents with university degrees
- Figure 6.2: Newspapers read at home shown at % of group
- Figure 6.3: Average number of afterschool clubs attended by each pupil
- Figure 6.4: Average number of clubs and hobbies listed by pupils
- Figure 6.5: *Home culture*
- Figure 6.6: *Community embeddedness*
- Figure 6.7: *Friendship group culture*
- Figure 6.8: *Attitude to school*
- Figure 6.9: *Aspiration*
- Figure 7.1: Open class /h/ realisation
- Figure 7.2: Word medial /t/-realisation
- Figure 7.3: /θ/-realisation by group
- Figure 7.4: /θ/-realisation by group – boys only
- Figure 8.1: % of pupils who have DAR in their presentation speech repertoire
- Figure 8.2: Definite article realisation for pupils scoring below 0.90 on HLs
- Figure 8.3: % of pupils who have *were-for-was* in their presentation speech repertoire
- Figure 8.4: % of pupils from each group using taboo language or raising inappropriate topics
- Figure 8.5: Taboo language broken down by category
- Figure 8.6: Tokens of *Like-DM* broken down by group
- Figure 9.1: Share of pupils from each group making different types of 'New Head' presentation
- Figure 9.2: Average social indices scores broken down by 'New Head' presentation type
- Figure 9.3: Phonetic variable realisation broken down by 'New Head' presentation type
- Figure 9.4: % of 'New Head' presentations which used humour
- Figure 9.5: % of pupils who advocated more sports during their 'New Head' presentation
- Figure 12.1: Excel sheet used to tie statements to social indices
- Figure 12.2: Indices Excel input sheet
- Figure 12.3: Hidden calculations in Excel spreadsheet
- Figure 12.4: SPSS compatible spreadsheet: social variables

- Figure 12.5: Linguistic data input sheet
- Figure 12.6: SPSS Compatible spreadsheet: all variables

Preface

My interest in this topic is very personal and comes from an uncomfortable experience I had when I applied for a place on a teacher-training course.

I left school with no qualifications and worked in factories for several years before becoming a postman. In my twenties, I rose through the ranks at Royal Mail, becoming a depot manager and going on to manage a range of national major change projects. This brought me into contact with people in senior leadership positions right across the UK. In my early thirties, I left this behind to pursue an English Language degree (an ambition that had been building in me for a number of years). I obtained a first class honours degree from Lancaster University and my dissertation was on a sociolinguistic topic.

I decided to pursue a career in teaching, applied for a place on a course at a Russell Group university and was given an interview. A couple of minutes into the interview, the head of the course stopped proceedings and told me that I was applying for a job as an English teacher, and yet I wasn't speaking standard English. He told me that I had to be able to speak standard English because I would sometimes be required to 'correct' the poor English spoken by my pupils. Furthermore, he told me that if I continued to speak with my Lancashire dialect, I would struggle to find work because no head teacher would want to employ me: he said that doctors, solicitors and the like would complain to the head teacher if their children came home and told them that the man teaching them to speak English couldn't speak it himself. He said that we must ensure that children can speak standard English properly, otherwise, they would be unable to achieve social mobility, get a good job and lead successful lives. He also pointed out that it was an explicit term of the English National Curriculum that all pupils should be taught to speak standard English.

There was a lot to object to. Firstly, I had never before experienced any kind of discrimination based on my dialect in any of the management roles I had undertaken - I was used to being judged on my competence (sometimes positively, sometimes negatively, depending on if I was doing a good job). Secondly, as someone brought up and still deeply embedded in a working-class community, the idea that successful lives were the preserve of standard English speakers was deeply offensive. My friends are

builders, nurses, plumbers, mechanics, hairdressers, wagon drivers, chefs, care workers etc. and most of them appear to be living successful lives to me. Then there was the ignorance of his beliefs about nonstandard speech. I later learned that he had an English literature background and knew very little about the workings of the English language.

Over the summer, I researched the topic and found that the English National Curriculum does indeed explicitly state that nonstandard speaking pupils need to speak standard English. Throughout my teacher-training, I maintained an interest in this topic and found that some teachers were passionate about the need to teach pupils to speak standard English, others ignored the requirement and felt that it was unfair, and perhaps the majority of teachers were confused about what standard English was and avoided becoming involved in it wherever possible. I researched this for a master's degree.

The attitude of the passionate pro-standard English teachers and the government's heavily pro-standard English stance prompted this thesis.

My background has given me a different outlook to most of the people involved in this debate. The middle-class values and attitudes of academics and educationalists – particularly in regard to the need to change the way you speak in order to gain a social advantage - are often alien to me and, I believe, to many of the working-class people who are completely voiceless in this debate.

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Thank you to the Heads of English and the Senior Leadership Teams in all of the schools. A particular thanks to Nick¹ at Pennine High who made me feel part of the English Department and who was so accommodating to the needs of my study.

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¹ Surnames have been omitted where it could lead to the identification of schools

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Author's Declaration

None of this work has previously been published.

Except where stated, all of the work contained within this thesis represents the original contribution of the author.

This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive ... those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience

(CS Lewis).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This opening chapter sets out the broad issue under investigation in this research project, namely, the requirement for pupils in English secondary schools to adopt standard English (SE) when they speak. After introducing the ‘Requirement’² and the issues it raises, its implementation is reviewed and an account of current teaching requirements is given. In the second half of the chapter the arguments for and against the Requirement are critiqued and the research questions are introduced.

1.1. Overview

My interest in this topic stems from the Requirement built into the English National Curriculum (NC) which states that:

Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English (DfE, 2013b: 10) [in] formal and informal contexts (p52)

The Requirement is founded on the belief that certain situations ‘demand’ it, for example, ‘job interviews or debates’ (DfES, 2002: 68), and that pupils unable to adopt it may find themselves disadvantaged as a result. The Requirement is built into the teaching guidance and assessment criteria throughout primary and secondary school.

This is controversial because SE is considered by many to be a middle-class dialect (Cox, 1991: 28, Kerwsill and Culpeper, 2010: 224, Moss, 2003: 159) and some argue that it is discriminatory that pupils who do not speak it, overwhelmingly people from working-class communities, should suffer any disadvantages as a result. Clarke et al

² For purposes of brevity, the ‘requirement for spoken standard English’ will be shortened to the ‘Requirement’ – with a capitalised R

(2006: 126) say in *The Complete Guide to Becoming an English Teacher*: '[t]he clear message is that the working class form of English is not really tolerated'.

For some, the Requirement will contribute to a belief that schools 'reflect and encourage the values and standards of [the middle-classes]' (Edwards, 1985: 131), leaving them with a sense of alienation (Snell, 2013: 110) and a feeling that they 'don't belong within the school community' (Reay, 2009: 25).

This research was motivated by a desire to develop empirical evidence about what might influence pupils in their decisions about which linguistic choices to make during classroom presentations. It is hoped that, in the absence of any government evidence on this issue (see 1.4), the findings of this study can inform educational policy makers and teachers alike. Social theories about identity construction will be used to explore the maintenance of informal, localised linguistic features during classroom presentations. Analysis at the phonetic, lexico-grammatical and discourse levels will highlight the motivations and influences under which pupils construct and perform their social identities as they enter adolescence.

1.2 The Great Grammar Crusade

The Requirement was embedded into the English NC in the early 1990s following an acrimonious battle referred to as the 'Great grammar crusade' (Cameron, 1995: 78) – described as 'the most ignorant and the most viciously stupid public debate of the past twenty years' (MacCabe, 1990: 7) where 'a bad argument [was] put forward by people who know little or nothing about language' (Cameron, 1995: 85). During this time, right-wing politicians fought left-leaning teachers about what should be taught in English classrooms. Three questions were under debate:

1. Should explicit grammar teaching be reintroduced?
2. What kind of grammar model would be preferable? Descriptive, where language use was described, or prescriptive, where an SE model of grammar was promoted?
3. What were the reasons for teaching grammar?

Influential members of the Conservative government at the time generally believed that grammar should be explicitly taught, that a prescriptive model was required and that the reason for teaching grammar was to ensure that pupils spoke SE correctly (Cameron, 1995: 88-89), views that many believe were ideologically motivated (Cameron, 1995, Cox, 1991, 1994).

The ‘crusade’ began in 1983 when John Honey (1983) utilised the ‘entitlement’ argument in his book, *The Language Trap*, to suggest that schools were failing working-class and ethnic minority children by not insisting that they use spoken SE exclusively in school. Children who could not speak SE, he argued, would find themselves at a social disadvantage. He rejected the ‘all varieties are equal’ maxim because, he said, no one else in society believed this to be true, and he argued that pupils should be made to speak SE even if it damaged their self-esteem (Honey, 1983: 31). Furthermore, he argued that spoken SE was the mark of intelligent, educated speakers and claimed that a variety like Black English:

whilst adequate to the needs of its speakers’ in Brixton, would not necessarily be adequate to the more sophisticated needs which black Brixtonians might develop if only they were better educated (Cameron, 1995: 98).

In 1992 Dr John Marenbon, a Cambridge lecturer who specialised in medieval philosophy, was made chairman of the National Curriculum Council (Cox, 1994: 25). He openly argued that spoken SE was superior on conceptual and linguistic grounds because of its long history of continuous development ‘for the highest purposes of thought, argument and aesthetic expression’ (Cameron, 1995: 99). In a reader aimed at new teachers, *Teaching English*, he argued that teachers should:

recognise the superiority of [SE] and see it as [their] task to make pupils write it well and thereby gain the ability to speak it fluently (Marenbon, 1994: 21).

These views formed the basis of the Requirement in today’s NC. In the years following the introduction of the Requirement, several reviews were set up and dismissed as biased by teachers and academics. During one such review the Secretary of State for Education personally intervened to reinstate the requirement that ‘all teachers at all times must correct nonstandard speech’ (Cameron, 1995: 91-92). A minister described a recommendation for the child’s dialect to be respected as ‘repugnant’ (Ager, 2001: 49) and a panellist at one review said that ‘[SE] still remains an area where prejudice and opinion are elevated over knowledge’ (Ager, 2001: 49). Teaching material produced and funded by the DoES was described by politicians as ‘dangerous’, permission to reproduce them was withdrawn (Davidson, 1994: 9) and teachers were described by the right wing as ‘the enemy’ (Cox, 1994: 25).

Since its inception the NC has undergone several reforms and four full reviews, in 1993, 1996, 2000 and 2008. In October 2011 the incoming coalition government announced a new review and the review document stated that:

The new [NC] will set out only the essential knowledge that all children should acquire, and give schools and teachers more freedom to decide how to teach this most effectively (DfE, 2011).

This was motivated, in part, by a belief that the previous government had taken too much control over the curriculum to the extent that teachers were being ‘de-skilled’ (DfE, 2011). There was a commitment to reduce ideological influences by appointing an ‘Expert Panel’ to ensure that the new NC was ‘based in evidence and informed by international best practice’ (DfE, 2011). However, when the new NC was released, references to spoken SE had been strengthened: references to pupils being ‘taught’ to speak SE (rather than the more passive requirement ‘be able to’) and for spoken SE to be used in ‘informal and formal’ (rather than only ‘formal’) contexts were reinstated into the 2011 curriculum after being withdrawn from previous versions. I submitted a Freedom of Information request asking for the evidential basis for the strengthening of the Requirement but the Department for Education have been unable to provide any (my request and their response is attached as Appendix A).

The coalition government have also made changes to the end-of-school summative exams that pupils in England are required to sit prior to starting work or moving on to college, known as the General Certificate of Secondary Education, or GCSE. Part of the English GCSE requires pupils to carry out three Speaking and Listening (S&L) assessments and, previously, these were worth 20% of the overall mark. The mark

scheme makes it clear that pupils are expected to speak SE if they are to achieve the higher grades. For example, the current English Language GCSE content and assessment objectives list three criteria which must be assessed as part of the S&L tasks, which are:

- Demonstrate presentation skills in a formal setting
- Listen and respond appropriately to spoken language, including to questions and feedback to presentations
- Use spoken Standard English effectively in speeches and presentations (DfE, 2013a)

Each grade contains descriptors on these three bullet points. In regard to SE, grades are achieved as follows:

G: They show some recognition of the functions of [SE].

F: They use features of [SE] vocabulary and grammar appropriately.

E: They generally use [SE] vocabulary and grammar where appropriate.

D: They are increasingly aware of the need for, and use of, [SE] vocabulary and grammar.

C: They show a competent use of [SE] vocabulary and grammar in situations that demand it.

B: They show effective use of [SE] vocabulary and grammar in a range of situations.

A: They show an assured use of [SE] vocabulary and grammar in a range of situations and for a variety of purposes.

A*: They are sensitive in their choice of speech style and their use of [SE] vocabulary and grammar is mature and assured (WJEC, 2009).

This means that pupils will find it difficult to achieve anything over a Grade D without speaking SE and Perera (1994: 10) argues that such mark criteria ‘is measuring not the school’s effectiveness, not the pupil’s ability, but their social background.’ However, in a drive towards course-final assessments and away from the module system, the government has removed the marks for the three S&L activities from the final grade. Pupils are still required to carry out the S&L activities but the results are recorded on the certificate as stand-alone marks and no longer contribute 20% to the overall grade recorded on the certificate. Whilst I believe this is a fairer system because the maintenance of home dialects will no longer affect pupils’ overall GCSE marks, the message that nonstandard home dialects are less acceptable than SE home dialects remains the same and there is a risk that potential employers could interpret the low S&L scores recorded on the English GCSE certificate as indicating that a nonstandard speaking pupil has poor communication skills. The coalition government also abolished the *Investigating Spoken English* module (DfE, 2013a), an innovative project introduced in 2010 which gave pupils the opportunity to investigate language use, including in regard to their own accent and dialect if they wished (AQA, 2010).

1.3 The case for the Requirement

In the years since the high emotion which clouded the debate on spoken SE has subsided, several reasons have emerged in justification of the insistence on the use of spoken SE in schools. Table 1.1 summarises the most well-rehearsed of these.

Table 1.1: Summary of arguments put forward in favour of prescribing spoken SE

Argument	Supporting quote
1. The superiority argument: standard English is superior to NSDs (nonstandard dialects)	'In an ideal classroom, the teacher would not hesitate to prescribe to the children on matters of grammatical correctness. He or she would recognise the superiority of standard English and see it as his or her task to make pupils write it well and thereby gain the ability to speak it fluently' (Marenbon, 1994: 21).
2. The standards argument: there is a causal link between standards of speech and behaviour	'If you allow standards to slip to the stage where good English is not better than bad English, where people turn up filthy at school...all these things tend to cause people to have no standards at all, and once you lose standards then there's no imperative to stay out of crime' (Norman Tebbit, 1985, Radio 4 interview, cited in Cameron, 1995: 94)
3. The correct English argument: standard English is correct and NSDs are incorrect	'It's grammatically correct English...so that you can be understood clearly, so that you don't speak sloppily...'He done it' is speaking English incorrectly. That's bad grammar. We think it important that our children speak correctly' (David Pascall, Chairman of the National Curriculum Council, quoted in Independent on Sunday, 13 th September 1992, cited in Cameron, 1995: 102).
4. The degeneration argument: if action is not taken to improve the speech of school children, speakers will diversify and become mutually unintelligible	The alternative [to standardisation] is too terrible to contemplate: it is believed that if these efforts at maintenance are neglected, the language will be subject to corruption and decay, and will ultimately disintegrate. The future of the language...cannot be left to the millions of fluent native speakers who use it every day: if it is not taken care of by privileged authorities, it will inevitably decline' (position summarised but not supported by Milroy, 2007: 138)
5. The cultural unity argument: the unity of the nation will be enhanced if everybody speaks the same dialect	I see the national curriculum as a way of increasing our social coherence...our children are in danger of losing any sense at all of a common culture and a common heritage' (Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education, cited in Pound, 1996: 237)
6. The <i>lingua franca</i> argument: Standard English can be understood by all English speakers and can be used by speakers of different dialects to communicate with one another	'It is essential that there be a uniform way of talking, for the economy, for national communications, for exchange of politics and even on the level of individual couples being able to communicate...And there are rules for that' (Judith Kuriansky, psychologist and therapist, speaking on the BBC World Service, August, 1999, cited in Block & Cameron, 2002: 67)

Table 1.1 cont: Summary of arguments put forward in favour of prescribing spoken SE

<p>7. The entitlement argument: giving children access to standard English will grant them ‘entitlement’ to the higher institutions of society which are closed to NSD speakers</p>	<p>‘If pupils do not have access to standard English then many important opportunities are closed to them, in cultural activities, in further and higher education, and in industry, commerce and the professions’ (Cox, 1991: 29)</p>
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Some of these arguments are elitist (1 – 3), for example, the belief that SE is ‘superior’ to (Marenbon, 1994: 21) or more ‘correct’ (Cameron, 1995: 102) than NSDs; some are pragmatic (4 – 6), such as the belief that it could be used as a *lingua franca* (Block and Cameron, 2002: 67); and others seek to facilitate cultural unity (Pound, 1996: 237).

Most of the debates today centre on the entitlement argument (7) which posits that all children are *entitled* to the same opportunities and if the education system fails to equip non-standard speaking children with the ability to adopt spoken SE, then this entitlement may be denied them. This narrative has been regularly repeated over the past thirty-five years (see for example Clarke et al., 2006: 172, Cox, 1991: 29, McCabe, 1990: 11, Honey, 1983: 31, Trudgill, 1975: 55). It typically involves a statement similar to the one made recently by newspaper columnist, Simon Heffer:

If someone’s [spoken] English is poor we tend to consider them uneducated or unconvincing; which may bar them from getting a job or in some other way advancing in life (BBC, 2010b).

Heffer refers only to ‘poor’ English without pinpointing any specific features but the Department for Education and Skills (2002: 68) explicitly make the claim that spoken SE is a prerequisite in some situations: the KS3 *Key Objectives Bank* has a section on SE and under the subheading *What to teach* is the bullet point:

The importance of spoken SE: some people have very strong views and expectations about its use and *some situations demand it, e.g. debates, job interviews* (my italics)

Supporters of the Requirement point to public concerns about the ability of school leavers to communicate effectively, as evidenced by regular media articles on the subject. Britten (2004) reports that youths are leaving school ‘unemployable’ due to their inability to communicate properly; several schools in working-class areas have offered elocution lessons or ‘banned slang’, citing the poor quality of spoken English (see, for example, Henry, 2008, BBC, 2009, Harris, 2012, Watson, 2012, Furness, 2013, Webb, 2013) and there are regular media-reported contributions from celebrities such as Emma Thompson (BBC, 2010a) about the poor state of speech found in our schools. These complaints often cite the use of ‘slang’ although the term is never defined and more specific linguistic issues are rarely highlighted. These criticisms often have a social class element to them whereby the groups singled out for criticism are often from the most deprived areas (see, for example, 3.3 regarding criticisms of ‘chavs’).

Lippi-Green (2012: 70) identifies several steps required to facilitate language subordination and many of these can be seen in regard to the Requirement. In particular, authority is claimed over language use, as seen by the comments of those promoting elitist arguments (John Honey, John Marenbon, Norman Tebbit) – although it isn’t necessarily an authority that comes from linguistic expertise but can also come from a sense of social superiority. Promises and threats are used to suggest that an ability to speak SE will open up opportunities whilst an inability to speak SE will be

detrimental to future success, evidenced through the messages regularly sent out by people such as Simon Heffer.

1.4 The case against the Requirement

Ever since the time of the debate leading to the introduction of the NC there has been vociferous opposition to the Requirement. Pauwels (1998: 117) argues that successful implementation of language change requires the changes to meet two criteria, they must be linguistically viable and socially effective, but these conditions do not seem to have been met in regard to spoken SE.

1.4.1 Linguistically viable?

Arguments against the Requirement often focus on the problems associated with definitions of spoken SE and NSDs, the blurred distinctions between accents and dialects and the conflation of standardness and formality, as discussed below.

1.4.1.1 Defining spoken SE

Ever since the opening debates around the Requirement, the government has found it difficult to explain what is meant by spoken SE. When the first report on the English National Curriculum was submitted to the Home Secretary for Education, Kenneth Baker, he asked its author, Professor Brian Cox, how he should explain what was meant by SE. Cox (1991: 26) says this was not an easy question to answer. When David Pascall, the chairman of the National Curriculum Council was asked what he meant by ‘grammatically correct [spoken SE]’ he replied that children should not split the infinitive (Cox, 1994: 28). Part of the problem comes about because of the constant evolution of English. At any given moment, several grammatical variables will be in a state of flux between being nonstandard and being accepted into the mainstream.

Current examples include *you* as a non-specific personal pronoun (as opposed to *one*), *less* for *fewer* and *who* for the objective case (as opposed to *whom*). In each of these cases, some will argue that the feature has become accepted as standard whilst some will maintain that it is nonstandard.

During the development of the NC, Cox's attempts to clarify what was meant by spoken SE became lost in attempts to appease both wings of the debate so that the promised 'definition of [SE]' collapsed into the almost meaningless tautology '[SE] is characterised by correct forms of vocabulary and grammar' (Davidson, 1994: 38). Faced with this confusion, it seemed easier to define what SE wasn't (Thomas et al., 2004: 175) and, in one of their attempts to clear up the confusion, the Qualification and Curriculum Authority issued guidance for teachers which stated:

The [NC] requirements for teaching standard spoken English refer specifically to a set of nonstandard usages in England:

- subject–verb agreement (they was)
- formation of past tense (have fell and I done)
- formation of negatives (ain't)
- formation of adverbs (come quick)
- use of demonstrative pronouns (them books)
- use of pronouns (me and him went)
- use of prepositions (out the door).

These features are described as nonstandard because they are found in regional dialects of English (QCA, 2004: 14).

This list appears to be ambiguous and incomplete. For example, are double negatives included under the bullet point *formation of negatives* even though the example given is *ain't*? It also omits several salient nonstandard grammatical features such as the invariant *innit* tag and lexical dialect terms such as *owt*. Critics of this method of 'definition by exception' argue that by focusing on this small set of 'social shibboleths' (Perera, 1994: 86) it is near impossible for teachers to highlight them without sounding as if they are correcting the speakers' dialect. The new curriculum document is no clearer, defining SE as:

the variety of the English language that is generally used for formal purposes in speech and writing. It is not the English of any particular region and it can be spoken with any accent (DfE, 2013b: glossary of terms).

Cheshire (2005a), Philip (2011) and Graddol et al (2005: 223) all argue that the variation between NSDs and SE should be seen as a continuum that speakers shift along as they adjust their proportions of standard and nonstandard forms in response to the social situation. Third-wave sociolinguists such as Snell (2013) might argue that this is a futile discussion because issues of standardness are only one resource speakers can draw upon as they pick their linguistic variables. According to Moore (2003), first-wave sociolinguists were concerned with variation on a broad level, such as social class or gender (eg Trudgill and Labov's earlier work), the second-wave involved looking within those broad social groups to community groups (eg. Cheshire's Reading gang study; Milroy's Belfast study) and third-wave studies look at intraspeaker stylistic variation (eg Eckert's Jocks and Burnouts). Snell (2013, 110) says:

[NSDs] of English do not have a discrete system of grammar that is isolated from other varieties; rather local dialect forms interact with a range of semiotic resources (*including* standard forms) within speakers' repertoires (her italics)

The nonstandard speakers in her study appeared to have a much wider range of linguistic options open to them than SE speakers did, including the use of localised dialect forms, standard forms, supra-local forms and global nonstandard forms (Snell, 2013, 110).

1.4.1.2 Teachers' understanding of spoken SE

The problems in regard to definitions of standard English can also be found among English teachers. My own MA research found widespread confusion among teachers, for example:

- Defining 'standard': 47% of teachers felt that split infinitives were standard, 53% thought they were nonstandard; and 43% of teacher thought that the semi-modal auxiliary with contracted negation *oughtn't* was standard whilst 57% thought it was nonstandard.
- Standardness versus formality: the sentences *Shut your trap.* and *He's bang on.* were thought to be nonstandard by 97% and 93% of participants respectively, despite the fact that they do not breach any of the rules of SE – but are informal.
- Accent versus dialect: 40% of teachers said that /θ/-fronting and stopping were issues of dialect; 30% of teachers thought that /g/-dropping was dialectal; 25% of teachers said that /h/-dropping was dialectal; and 25% of teachers thought that double negatives were accent features rather than dialect features.

The confusion between accent and dialect is particularly problematic for some teachers because the NC is specifically tolerant of accent variation (Clarke et al., 2006: 171, Hudson and Holmes, 1995). Cox (1991: 26), who was responsible for the initial development of the English NC, said that pupils should be ‘rightly proud of their pronunciation’ and that the ‘English curriculum ought to help overcome ... snobbery’, before conceding that ‘the task of overcoming arrogance about accents is formidable’. This suggests that accent ‘snobbery’ and ‘arrogance’ need to be challenged whilst dialect prejudice is accepted. In fact, the distinction between accent and dialect, like the relationship between standardness and formality, is littered with ambiguities. As Chambers and Trudgill (1980: 5) state, ‘dialects and accents frequently merge into one another without any discrete break.’

Despite the requirement to teach spoken SE, there is little practical guidance on how to teach pupils to adopt spoken SE without denigrating home dialects. In *Teaching English*, a reader for teachers, Cox (1994: 88) says that ‘all children should be supported in valuing their own dialects’ but offers no suggestions as to how this can be achieved within the framework of the NC. The NC and teacher training literature put the responsibility to achieve this balance onto teachers. Cox (1991: 29) said:

All pupils, therefore, must be able by the age of 16 to use spoken and written [SE]; *but schools have the responsibility to develop their own policies on the detail of how this should be done* (my italics).

In *The Complete Guide to Becoming an English Teacher*, Clarke et al (2004: 171) point out the requirement for SE and highlight the need to tread carefully in order to avoid denigrating home dialects, stating:

The onus is upon the teacher to discover ways of having pupils employ standard forms of speech willingly enough – whether informally or formally.

But, conspicuously, Clarke et al offer few suggestions as to how this should be achieved and point out that ‘the teacher who corrected the pupil every time he or she said ‘we was’ might well stand in danger of sounding like one who was imposing some other group’s social preferences’ (Clarke et al, 2004: 171). Practical suggestions are restricted to holding discussions on differences between standard and nonstandard forms and drama-based activities where NSD speakers are encouraged to adopt SE as part of a role, such as that of a newscaster.

This can be difficult because many English teachers have a limited knowledge of how the language works having gained English Literature degrees. This issue was recognised during the development of the NC and teaching material was produced to help teachers who had ‘only minimal background in the description of the English language’ (Committee for Linguistics in Education, 2007). Such an English teacher, faced with the complexities outlined above, could be forgiven for falling back on their own ideologically motivated position when determining which features are permissible and which features are not. It follows that pupils are at risk of being negatively evaluated if their speech deviates away from formal, high-prestige speech features. Indeed, official reports produced by the school’s inspectorate, Ofsted, have mistakenly supported the ‘correction’ of pupils’ pronunciation (Ofsted, 2013). Following reports in the media that a teacher had been given a ‘key objective’ to change her accent to make it sound more southern, Ofsted issues a clarification that ‘negative comments about the suitability of regional accents are clearly inappropriate’ (Sky News, 2013).

1.4.1.3 Teachers' attitudes towards spoken SE

In spite of the confusions around spoken SE, teachers are still expected to promote it and to mark pupils down when they do not use it, and this raises issues about teachers' motivation. Trudgill (1975: 61) believes that some teachers regard themselves as 'custodians' of what is 'right' in the English language but in the mid-70s (before the Great Grammar Crusade and the government's attempts to promote the prestige of spoken SE) he found that half of the teachers felt that 'schools should not attempt to change children's native dialects, or at least their accents'. Typical comments included:

As long as people are articulate, as long as they know what they're trying to say, it doesn't matter what sort of accent³ they use (Trudgill, 1975: 61).

But he also found teachers who were motivated to change their pupils' speech because they thought it was 'defective, wrong or unpleasant' (Trudgill, 1975: 61). Thirty years later in my own MA study, a third of teachers said they had marked pupils down for the use of nonstandard features (Austin, 2010) and there were indications that teachers who bought into the Requirement were more likely to focus on the structure of speech than the content – and that they held negative attitudes towards NSDs. I asked thirty English teachers to comment on the speech of a man with a strong Lancashire accent and dialect as part of a mock job interview scenario and when the results were divided between teachers who said they had and hadn't marked pupils down for using nonstandard speech, the results were striking. Table 1.2 shows that 63% of those who had previously marked pupils down for using nonstandard speech mentioned the structure (rather than

³ Trudgill (1975: 60) argues that attitudinal factors are common to both accent and dialect

the content) of the speech in the recordings they were played, compared to only 18% of those who said they hadn't marked pupils down. Conversely, teachers who said they hadn't previously marked pupils down for using nonstandard speech were nearly three times as likely to make comments based on the content, rather than the structure, of the speech in the recordings they were played.

Table 1.2: Percent of teachers who commented on speech *content* or speech *structure*

	Have marked pupils down	Have not marked pupils down
Commented on <i>content</i> of speech	13%	36%
Commented on <i>structure</i> of speech	63%	18%

The comments made by pro-Requirement teachers included 'his accent puts me off,' 'accent makes him sound less intelligent' and 'he sounds a bit dumb because of his accent,' showing that they were making judgments based on their personal ideologies rather than focusing on the content of the speech. Comments from anti-Requirement teachers included, 'Uses phrases like 'key indicators', 'sounds like he knows what he's talking about' and 'sounded the most professional – used lots of business terminology.'

Furthermore, Table 1.3 shows that when these two groups of teachers were presented with the statements *In spoken English, as in mathematics, there is right and wrong* and *Teachers should teach SE because it is better than nonstandard dialects*, teachers who were in favour of the Requirement were far more likely to agree with them (80% and 70%, respectively, contrasting with 6% and 13% from teachers who were not in favour).

Table 1.3: Percent of teachers agreeing with statements

	Have marked pupils down	Have not marked pupils down
"In spoken English as in mathematics, there is right and wrong"	80%	6%
"Teachers should teach standard English because it is better than nonstandard dialects"	70%	13%

It is difficult to see how these pro-Requirement teachers would be able to adhere to the Requirement without imparting the message that SE is better than their pupils' home dialects.

When these attitudinal traits are combined with the problems of definition, it seems inevitable that some teachers are likely to misjudge issues of formality or accent and penalise pupils for their use. In the worst cases, these findings suggest that the Requirement could serve to legitimise the prejudices of a small number of bigoted teachers.

1.4.2 Socially effective?

The language planning model adopted by the NC seems to be based on the concept of 'linguistic engineering' (Mesthrie et al., 2005: 398-9). According to this model, the fact that language is used as an expression of group solidarity is ignored and language attitudes which run counter to proposed changes are thought to be easy to overcome through the use of power and authority. However, the 'sociolinguistic approach' (Mesthrie et al, 2005: 398-9) recognises that since languages are embedded in the social life of their users, language planning cannot succeed if it considers only linguistic issues. Effective planning must take into account social, cultural, political and historic

variables, knowledge of language attitudes and the direction of social change in a given society (Mesthrie et al, 2005: 398-9). Looking back over the years since the Requirement was implemented, it is clear that significant social shifts have occurred across these areas which, I believe, have rendered the Requirement anachronistic.

1.4.2.1 The ‘fairness’ debate

One of the most important social shifts over recent decades is in regard to the fairness of British society. And although debates around fairness are social (rather than linguistic), social class and accent/dialect are intricately linked in England. As Fox (2004: 82) says, ‘[s]peech is all-important ... There are other [social] class indicators ... but speech is the most immediate and most obvious.’

The British government concedes that it has one of the worst records among its international counterparts for facilitating social mobility (HM Government, 2010) and the OECD⁴ (2010) puts Britain at the bottom of its social mobility league table of industrialised nations, prompting a number of government initiatives to try to improve our position relative to our competitors (Economist, 2009: 31). Trevor Phillips, head of the Equalities Commission, spoke out against what he termed ‘systemic bias’ in favour of the ‘white men who went to public school’ (Guardian, 2009) and said that ‘the new battlefield in the quest for equality is not on grounds of race, ethnicity or gender but on social class.’ The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (2009), a government-backed organisation established to break down the barriers preventing working-class people from gaining professional jobs, said, ‘social mobility should explicitly be the top overarching social policy priority for this and future governments’. In the run-up to the 2010 British election the three main political parties spoke out about

⁴ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

the need to bridge the equality gap (for examples see articles by Churcher, 2010, regarding Labour; DfE, 2010, regarding the Liberal Democrats; and Mulholland and Winton, 2010, regarding the Conservatives).

The public interest in fairness can be seen in the wave of television and radio documentaries exploring the topic, including *Posh and Posher: Why Public School Boys Run Britain* (BBC2, February 2011), *Who Gets the Best Jobs* (BBC2, March 2011), *Justice: Fairness and the Big Society* (BBC4, April 2011), *Poor Kids* (BBC1, August 2011), *Justice* (BBC4, September 2011), *The Class Ceiling* (BBC Radio 4, September 2011) *Young, Bright and on the Right* (BBC2, August 2012), *Accents speak louder than words* (ITV, September 2013) and *Breadline Kids* (Channel 4, June 2014). These programs both reflect and fuel a growing social interest in social justice and fairness.

The social interest in fairness has, at times, explicitly centred around language and a recognition of the important role language plays in individual identity and community pride with Government funding being used to promote minority languages such as Cornish and Manx (GOSW, 2009). In part, this is driven by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Language Rights (Follow up committee, 1996: 20) which enshrines a range of language rights, including ‘the right to use one's own language in private and public’, ‘the right for their own language and culture to be taught’ and ‘the right to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socioeconomic relations’. These rights are not yet extended to dialects although Scots, which some would argue is a dialect of English, has been recognised as a minority language by the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (Kerwsill and Culpeper, 2010:

228) and the devolved Scottish Government writes in Scots on their website (Scottish Government, 2011).

1.4.2.2 Social shifts: diversity and informalisation

Alongside this drive for fairness, the past few decades have also experienced concurrent social trends towards diversity (whereby a more diverse range of norms are socially accepted) and informalisation (where less stringent conventions are applied to situations) with society becoming less rigid and more open.

Regarding informalisation, see Biecher et al (1999) regarding casual dress styles at work, Stearns (2007) regarding the informalisation of manners and Warde and Martins (2000) regarding conventions around dining out. In linguistic terms, Kerswill (2006: 4 & 15) reports that an increased public tolerance for more diverse and less formal speech styles has been ongoing since the sixties when social changes led to an acceptance of non-RP accents in contexts where they would have previously been restricted. This situation, he argues, has accelerated since the 1980s with the rise of a meritocratic ideology which has ‘challenged the old upper class based “standard ideology”’ (Kerswill, 2006: 15). This process continues to the present day and Trudgill’s (1975: 14) model of change-resistance-acceptance can be seen in the tensions that followed in its wake. This model describes the process by which innovations become mainstream: innovations are initially resisted until they become used by a critical mass of people, then they are accepted. But even in the later stages of an innovation becoming mainstream, there are voices of resistance against them.

During the 2010 British election campaign, the Conservative leader, David Cameron, was criticised for his use of the informal term, *gagging for it*, in reference to his eagerness for the campaign to begin. Hughes (2010) believed this use of language constituted ‘reaching into the demotic depths’ but conceded that this view was likely to be considered ‘old fashioned’. And when a Jamaican continuity announcer was introduced to the middle-class radio station, BBC Radio 4, there was a hostile backlash where he was described as ‘appalling’, ‘American-ish but grating’, ‘difficult to understand and not at all pleasant to listen to’ (Guardian, 2006). However, this announcer is still practicing on the station today and has become an accepted part of the Radio 4 listener experience. The social acceptance of his accent contrasts with the situation in 1980 when Radio 4 first attempted to introduce a non-RP voice. Susan Rae’s Scottish accent was so virulently rejected by listeners that she was withdrawn from the station (Crystal, 2010: 27-28). This, Crystal believes, is recognition that there has been a ‘fundamental change in attitudes to regional speech’ over the course of the past thirty years.

For some, this shift has gone so far that an RP accent can be seen as a liability. Joan Bakewell recounted how she fought hard at the beginning of her career to lose her Stockport accent only to be told recently that she now sounded ‘too posh’ (Bloxham, 2012). The actor, Benedict Cumberbatch, similarly described Britain as a ‘posh-bashing’ nation (Thomas, 2012) and Ben Fogle said that ‘being posh is more of a liability than a help if you want to succeed in television’ (Glennie, 2013). It is interesting – in identity terms – that Fogle rejected advice to have elocution lessons in order to make him sound ‘less posh’ because he said he wanted to ‘stay true to who I am’ (Glennie, 2013). Whilst the term ‘posh’ is not necessarily pejorative (synonyms listed on Microsoft Word include *classy*, *noble* and *stylish*) its use in the context of

social class groupings is often loaded with negative associations, as can be seen from the context: *too posh, posh-bashing, liability*.

These social shifts make it difficult to sustain the argument that NSDs are a bar to high achievement. In sports reporting for example, commentators such as former leading professional footballers/managers Phil Neville⁵, Chris Waddle⁶ and Glen Hoddle⁷ command high status roles in television and radio, speaking with unchallenged authority using their NSD features. Similarly, in the business community people such as Lord Alan Sugar, a rambunctious self-made multimillionaire from a poor background, has been knighted and given a peerage – despite his nonstandard speech⁸. He also heads a television show which tries to identify people with business potential and several contestants with NSDs⁹ have progressed to the final stages.

In fact, it is difficult to identify occupations which appear to be closed down to nonstandard speakers, and where they are identified they are seen as being problematic. Ashley (2010) explored how attitudes towards diversity and equality among elite City lawyers were limiting opportunities for candidates who did not come from privileged backgrounds. Her research had a clear remit to identify discriminatory attitudes so that

⁵ Eg. ‘Them players have made the team worserer’, Radio 5 Live, 21:50, 22nd October 2014

⁶ Eg: ‘if you want *us* [me] you’ll have to sign *us* [me] ... I haven’t really *saw* many better [goals]’ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBki9MCLyE0>

⁷ Eg: we won’t get everything across the line, the ideas that we got ... they’ll learn even quicker’ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tSDDm8cykM>

⁸ Eg “I got a big problem with that ... I got your card marked ... was you the one ... he’s that much from going out the door ... he’s unbelievable this geezer <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35yG0WXodt4> you done well there ... one swallow don’t make a summer ... since then you ain’t done that great ... and it ain’t good <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkcPahgnChM>

⁹ Eg. “We aint gonna get the best out of it ... if you threes have got the balls to put yourself for team leader” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU2nRGWxaDk&list=PL9EoLQWf4d74SSWLRlyfU8u6SSukbAr7s> “it needs slapping out of us [me] ... I cannot do right” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkcPahgnChM>

they could be challenged and among the senior associates she recorded the following quotes:

There's no point promoting diversity to the extent that it encourages people to become lawyers who are not lawyers...image is everything in the law...it's all we've got, our product...What's the point of bringing *these people* along who are not lawyers to bring your diversity figures up? You're only going to end up firing them. (Senior Associate, Firm D) (my italics) (p17)

Clearly if the people that you're meeting are viewing you in terms of social context and you have someone from a poor working-class background who hasn't been exposed to that kind of thing before...people will lose out purely on the basis of that final part of the thing (p19).

There was one guy who came to interviews who was a real Essex barrow boy, and he had a very good CV, he was a clever chap, but we just felt that there's no way we could employ him. I just thought, putting him in front of a client - you just couldn't do it (p18).

Where these attitudes exist, many people would argue that the correct response is to challenge them rather than to tell pupils to change their accents and dialects in order to appease them, as the current requirements do.

1.5 Research questions

The Requirement raises issues across a number of areas which could be empirically tested – although little specific investigation appears to have been carried out. In regard

to educational policy, there are questions about whether it is possible to promote spoken SE without denigrating NSDs; about whether teachers are confident enough in their understanding of spoken SE to teach it effectively; and about teachers' attitudes to NSDs which may affect their interpretation of the Requirement and their treatment of nonstandard speakers. There are social questions about whether the Requirement is fair and about whether its central premise – that certain situations 'demand' spoken SE – is true today. And there are questions about working-class pupils' abilities or willingness to shift their speech style towards formal, high-prestige speech features in front of their peer groups – the main area of interest in this study.

The Research Questions (RQs) are:

1. How is linguistic variation used in the construction of social identities?
2. Who benefits from the Requirement?
3. What changes should be made, if any, to the National Curriculum in regard to the Requirements for spoken SE?

RQ1 is a staple quantitative sociolinguistic question whereby linguistic patterns are analysed and correlations with social factors are explored. Analysis for this question will also look at the specific issue of identity construction and will explore its impact during presentations; specifically, whether a pupils' speech features will be different when they have differing levels of their identities invested in their presentational performance. For example, will pupils adopt different speech features when playing a role compared to when speaking as themselves? This will be explored quantitatively by looking for statistical differences between the use of speech features during different

presentation types. This question could provide evidence about how identities can constrain the linguistic range open to pupils.

RQ2 involves assessing the overall impact of the Requirement on pupils from different backgrounds: Which groups are best served by the Requirement? Does it have a greater impact on boys or girls? Are there social class issues at play? How are attitudes affected by the Requirement?

RQ3 will form the conclusions of the thesis. Here, recommendations will be made in light of the evidence gathered and analysed. I explore the issue about whether the Requirement is good for working-class pupils because it equips them for life among the professional classes or whether it is bad for them because it constructs socially-biased hurdles for them to overcome which place them at a disadvantage compared to their middle-class counterparts.

1.6 Summary

This opening chapter has set out the area of interest of this thesis. It has shown how and why school children are required to speak SE. The review of the implementation of the NC showed how the Conservative government forced through an ideologically motivated linguistic agenda against the advice of expert opinion. Central to the Conservative ideology at the time was a belief in the superiority and correctness of the spoken SE: it was seen as the highest standard of speech, they believed, because it was used by those with the highest standards of moral behaviour. Conversely, the sloppy and slovenly speech used by the working-classes was seen to reflect their sloppy and slovenly moral standards.

In the second half of the chapter, I argued that the Requirement is unlikely to be successful because the two necessary conditions for language planning success, linguistic viability and social effectiveness, have not been met.

The discussion on the linguistic viability of the Requirement exposed insurmountable problems of definition, leaving teachers (and everyone else) unsure about what spoken SE is. This lack of clarity means that NSDs tend to be defined by how they deviate from accepted SE norms. The requirement in the curriculum to celebrate accent diversity makes the implementation of the Requirement even more difficult for teachers. The confusion is compounded by the government's initial refusal to publish material on the matter and its subsequent failure to clarify what it requires of teachers in this respect. Evidence from my own MA study showed that teachers' perceptions of poor speech are not confined to issues of grammar but include informal language and salient accent features, meaning that pupils are likely to be judged unfavourably by some teachers if they deviate away from formal, high-prestige features.

The vacuum around clarity of definition has been filled by teachers taking decisions based on their own ideologies about standard and nonstandard speech. Where teachers feel compelled to intervene and to encourage pupils to adopt SE, the evidence suggests that their motivation can come from their own hostile perception of localised accents and/or NSDs rather than a desire to open up future opportunities for their nonstandard speaking pupils.

I argued that the main argument put forward in support of the Requirement – the entitlement argument – is anachronistic in light of the social shifts which have taken place over the past few decades.

CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL FAILURE; FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS

The previous chapter was narrowly focused on how the Requirement became embedded in the NC and the issues which make it more or less workable. In this chapter wider educational issues will be discussed to identify some of the issues which may lead to tensions between school and pupils from working-class backgrounds. The chapter begins with a brief critique of the education system and how it caters for working-class pupils, I then discuss how the drive for social mobility has narrowed the curriculum offered in schools. The specific issues around boys' performance are reviewed before ethnographic studies are critiqued to highlight common patterns about how working- and middle-class pupils engage with school. Finally, the issues about how the Requirement might impact on pupils' self-esteem are explored.

By the end of this chapter, I hope to have shown that the decisions pupils make in regard to engagement with their education are heavily shaped by forces beyond their control: political decisions about the structures and cultures of schools; cultural messages about the value of working-class life (and the imperative to escape it); and influences from the home, communities and friendship groups.

2.1 Educational failure?

A critique of some of the educational changes since the middle of the last century suggest that our schools have systematically failed many working-class pupils, leaving them feeling disenfranchised at school. In his critique of the history of the English education system, Ball (2008) describes how Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in the sixties and early seventies were expected to invest in technical schools for the thousands of pupils who were potentially gifted builders, plumbers, mechanics etc, but

only fifty-two (out of over two hundred) LEAs ever funded them (Ball, 2008: 66). This systemic failure left many of those pupils languishing and frustrated in an educational setting not suited to their needs. This was recognised during Margaret Thatcher's term in office when Keith Joseph, often described as Margaret Thatcher's mentor, said about the education system, 'we tyrannise children to do that which they don't want, and we don't produce results' (Ball, 2008: 64).

Although the British education system has not invested in technical schools, other European countries appear to have successfully embraced them. A 2012 Germany government report described a highly developed system of vocational secondary schools (called 'Berufsfachschulen'). These include specialist schools which train pupils for careers as diverse as 'trade and technical occupations, crafts industry, home economics and social-work, artistic and the health sector occupations' (Lohmar and Eckhardt, 2012: 133).

Prior to coming to power in 2010, the Conservatives recognised the problems caused by such a narrow education system. Their leader, David Cameron, commissioned a State of the Nation report on education which found, among other things, that:

The curriculum is too rigid and too inflexible to meet the needs of our most disadvantaged children. This means under-achieving pupils struggle to engage with the curriculum ... There is insufficient emphasis on vocational training and alternative qualifications for children. These might help children at risk of social exclusion gain vital qualifications to prepare them for work and help to promote their self-esteem and confidence (Stancliffe et al., 2006: 14).

The study criticised a ‘one size fits all’ approach which, it said was ‘systemically failing the most disadvantaged pupils’ (Stancliffe et al., 2006: 11). However, since coming to power the government has overseen a further narrowing of the curriculum which has been widely criticised, even among Conservative supporters (Watkins, 2011).

The pupils left feeling frustrated in an unsuitable educational setting are much more likely to disengage from school and studies show close links between feelings of wellbeing in school and academic achievement. For example, a study commissioned for the DfE 2012 found:

- As children move through the school system, emotional and behavioural wellbeing become more important in explaining school engagement
- School wellbeing has been associated with academic progress in secondary school
- Problematic behaviour has been associated with poorer academic achievement (Gutman and Vorhaus, 2012)

This study showed statistically significant links between academic achievement and school enjoyment and between troublesome behaviour and feelings of victimisation.

2.2 The ‘aspiration imperative’

This narrowing of the NC can be attributed, in part, to what I would argue has been a misplaced response to the low rate of social mobility discussed in 1.4.2. Attempts to facilitate social mobility have led successive governments to generate a narrative which says that all working-class pupils must aspire to achieve middle-class status – whether they want to or not. In his book, *Chavs: the Demonisation of the Working Class*, Owen

Jones (2011) argues that pride and respect has been systematically eroded in working-class communities and has been replaced with a narrative that says that all people from working-class communities are expected to attempt to climb the social ladder and leave their communities behind. He describes how in the 1970s politicians talked about *improving* the lives of the working classes but, today, they only ever talk about aspiring to move out of the working classes. According to this narrative, what is left behind in place of the working-class is a ‘feckless, problematic rump’ (Jones, 2011: viii) of people who have failed to seize on the opportunities offered to them to move up.

This requirement for academic aspiration has become all-pervasive across education in recent years. The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (2009) says that ‘[f]or some, aspiration comes naturally, while for others it needs nurturing’, a statement which presupposes that someone who doesn’t aspire needs some kind of corrective action to address their deficit. And the Pupil Premium, brought in by the government to direct resources to the poorest pupils, has three aims: to increase social mobility, to enable more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to get to the top universities and to reduce the attainment gap between the highest and lowest achieving pupils nationally (Higgins et al., 2011). These aims offer no space for these pupils to develop a sense of pride in working-class culture or occupations. Why, some might ask, can’t the Pupil Premium be used to guide pupils towards developing a skilled trade?

Teachers are given an added incentive to promote the aspiration message because, over recent years, schools have been placed under more and more pressure to improve academic results (see, for example, Mansell and James, 2009). During my time as an English teacher I was personally told that when pupils lack aspiration, it is our job as teachers to ‘aspire for them’ and to do all we can to direct them towards academic

achievements. As teachers search for a narrative which could motivate disaffected working-class pupils, the aspiration narrative is a convenient message. Pupils are told time and time again that educational success is a prerequisite to a successful life beyond school. This can be a problematic message for many working-class pupils who are surrounded by people who were deemed educational failures and yet are enjoying successful lives in working-class occupations, and this leads to tensions and frustrations on both sides.

2.3 The ‘boys problem’

In addition to the hurdles described above, there are also gender related differences in terms of engagement and attainment in school which, some argue, specifically hamper opportunities for working-class boys. In 1999, Jack Straw, then Home Secretary, said that ‘the main social issue of our time pertains to the behaviour and role of young men’ (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 1). Boys commit three times as much crime as girls and are deemed more antisocial (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 1). When riots broke out in cities across England in the summer of 2011, nine out of every ten rioters were male and forty percent of school-age rioters were eligible for free school meals (Jones, 2011: xxii) despite this group making up only 16.3% of the secondary school population (Hatton, 2013).

Smith (2010: 42) reports that schools have ‘never been able to deal with the working-class boy’ and that if grammar school entrance exam marks hadn’t been weighted in favour of boys in the 1960s, 70% of pupils would have been girls. Girls have consistently achieved higher GCSE results than boys for the past fifteen years and the gap has remained stubbornly persistent in spite of the efforts of educationalists. Ofsted

(2003) reports that this is an international problem and names English in a list of particularly concerning subjects.

Most studies point out that the problem of boys' comparatively poor performance is complex and has many components – but many studies highlight 'macho' culture which is frequently manifested as an anti-school attitude. This is especially true when machismo is combined with working-class culture (Eckert, 2008, Willis, 1977, O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000, Ofsted, 2003, Reay, 2009). Preece (2009: 55-56) notes several anti-school traits which are associated with 'laddishness', including:

hanging out, having a laugh, avoiding bookishness, showing little interest in academic work, bad behaviour in the classroom, acting tough, participating in witty repartee and playing sport, particularly football

The reference to 'having a laugh' was also a feature of Willis (1977: 14, 29) study and appears to be an important trait for groups of working-class boys. And many of these characteristics can be seen as 'hegemonic masculinity', taken to be:

the assumed, unmarked form of masculinity that prevails in a culture and is all the more potent in its influences because it goes unnoticed as a master narrative or dominant discourse ... Men are supposed to be in control of the household, endorse a compulsory heterosexuality for self and others, be oriented towards competition and achievement, are emotionally over-controlled and under-expressive, and value rational thought over intuition (Moissinac, 2007: 233).

In linguistic terms too, boys appear to be at a disadvantage. Taylor (2001: 301) reports a study by Maltz and Borker (1982) which found that:

Social success among boys is based on knowing how and when to use words to express power. Verbal duelling, storytelling, joke-telling, and other narrative performance events are highly valued and cultivated in boys' friendship groups. An important sociolinguistic skill a boy is expected to learn is how to get the floor to perform, maintain his audience in the midst of a series of challenges, and successfully complete his performance. Boys learn to assert their identity and opinions in such contexts by side comments, putdowns, and challenges.

These practices are likely to be frowned on in the school setting and could add to the mounting number of issues which leave working-class boys further adrift in the education system. Boys will also typically use fewer prestigious variants than girls, whilst (particularly working-class) males will retain low-prestige features (Mesthrie, 2001: 339). Studies also tend to show that females are generally more adept at using linguistic variation than males, have a wider stylistic range (Eckert, 2000: 29), use language more symbolically (Moore, 2004) and have better verbal reasoning skills (Smith, 2010: 39).

The evidence that females use more prestigious speech features than males is 'overwhelming' (Eckert, 2000: 121) and, when other things are equal, women use more standard forms than men (Coupland, 2007: 132). But the historical, social and cultural legacies that lie behind the ways in which different genders use language is complex, making it problematic to stamp different speech styles with labels such as male and female. Such reductivist tendencies, common to first-wave sociolinguists (see 1.4.1)

inevitably gloss over the role of other variables such as age, social class groupings, social conditions, culturalisation, attitudes and affiliations. For example, in Milroy's (1980) Clonard study, working-class women used more vernacular speech features than men, which Milroy hypothesised was linked to the fact that female networks were stronger than male networks because to the decline in typically male industries such as shipbuilding. Eckert's (2000: 459) data shows boys leading in the use of negative concord but a closer examination of the data showed that the 'Burned out Burnouts' girls' subgroup used the feature more frequently than any other group. In Cheshire's (1982) data, variations between different groups of females were greater than differences between boys and girls (discussed in Coupland, 2007: 134). And Labov (1990: 243, cited in Moore, 2003) showed that working-class women could use more vernacular than men. For Cameron (2005: 483), these complexities change the way we view gender studies so that when the question is asked, 'how are men and women different?' the answer has to be 'which men and which women?'

These issues will apply equally to educational as well as linguistic conditions and Cameron (2005: 490) cites Butler's linguistic performance theory as a possible explanatory factor. This theory suggests that gender performances are solidified in individuals through repeated performances of gender by boys and girls. Distinctions between boys and girls may also be exacerbated because some boys can be motivated in the identities they construct by a desire not to appear female (Eckert, 2000: 123-124) or, more convolutedly, not to appear 'gay' with its connotations of femininity (Moissinac, 2007: 232).

In response to these complexities, researchers need to be mindful when discussing gender. While differences in the use of language, or attitudes to education, may be

‘made relevant’ (Cameron, 2005: 487) in regard to gender in a specific situation, the wider context needs to be given due attention.

2.4 Bottom-up social factors: home culture and communities

Several studies suggest that a pupil’s home culture and immediate community are crucial factors in influencing the identities that pupils’ construct in school. Green and White (2007) believe that:

The influence of (particularly) parents, in (in)forming aspirations, attitudes to employment, education and training, and in helping access jobs, can be very important for young people (p34)... Family, friends and wider social networks play an important role in shaping attitudes, aspirations and behaviour (p37).

These different influences have profound impacts upon children and can lead to vastly different outcomes. Middle-class parents are more likely to have experienced educational success and are in a much stronger position to navigate their way through the schooling system to the advantage of their children (Reay, 2009: 24). They often invest significant resources in shaping both the opportunities open to their children and their children’s abilities to make the best of those opportunities. ‘Sharp-elbowed middle-class parents’ (Economist, 2009) may, for example, move into the catchment areas of the best schools or pay for private tuition to help their children to pass grammar school entrance exams. But they are also likely to pro-actively imbue their children with ‘cultural capital’ by exposing them to enrichment activities such as visits to theatres and museums and by reading canonical literature to them (Scherger and Savage, 2009). Through their influence, middle-class parents teach their children the rules of the education game (Sullivan, 2001).

Milroy (1987) hypothesised that depth of embeddedness in working-class communities would affect the participants in her Belfast study. To explore this, she scored participants on how tight their social networks were (referred to as 'network density') and how many links there were between people in the networks (plexity). A 'multiplex network' would be one in which people have more than one relationship to each other. Moore (2010: 349) offers the following example of a dense, multiplex network:

someone who works on an assembly line might also play in the factory's brass band with people who are simultaneously colleagues, ex-school friends, and neighbours (simultaneously embedding occupational, educational, and housing statuses in concrete social engagement).

By contrast, in a uniplex network, people tend to have only one relationship to each other. Milroy found that dense, multiplex networks act as norm enforcement mechanisms so that people embedded in such networks are constrained in how far they can move away from local norms. In such communities, people are under pressure to conform to these norms across many areas of their lives, such as dress, speech and attitudes, and moving outside them can lead to the imposition of social sanctions. This has parallels to Green and White's (2007: 34) concepts of 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital. 'Bonding social capital', like dense multiplex networks, promotes an inward looking culture resulting in people living in a social comfort zone. In contrast, 'bridging social capital', like loose, uniplex networks, facilitates links with areas beyond the immediate social horizon.

Areas of heavy manufacturing can facilitate the development of dense, multiplex networks where people live, work and socialise in the same geographical location and families in these communities are much more likely to be working-class. Conversely, middle-class people are more likely to have loose, uniplex networks due to their higher levels of geographical mobility. These could be significant factors in this study because in the tight-knit northern mill town communities, many secondary school pupils will be embedded in networks which are very dense and multiplex.

At the most disenfranchised end of the spectrum, some pupils in working-class or workless homes can be exposed to very negative attitudes towards education. Some parents bring with them considerable resentment about their own miserable schooldays (Reay, 2009) and this may be particularly pronounced for children of parents who suffered for their lack of academic abilities under cruel and oppressive teachers. In this situation, parents may believe that school is something to be tolerated (at best) or even rebelled against. Such parents are likely to believe that school can damage their children's self-esteem and are likely to minimise the contact they have with school.

Children in some of the most deprived areas are likely to have even more barriers to developing a positive attitude to school because the promise of a good job in exchange for conformance seems beyond their reach. The decimation of manufacturing industries over the past fifty years has had a huge impact on the cohesion previously found in the old working-class communities of the industrial heartlands and researchers have identified communities where the majority of the local population is out of work. For example, Green and White (2007: 50) describe workless communities which have become insular and have 'lost touch with knowledge of working environments and of associated work disciplines'. They cite instances where parents go to sign on the dole

and tell their children, ‘Look closely, you’ll be doing this soon’ (Green and White, 2007: 55). This type of home culture, they believe, can cultivate a lack of hope and low self-esteem as well as holding children back from achieving their potential.

In linguistic terms, such differences in background are thought to lead to differences in speech styles. One of the most influential (and controversial) theorists in this regard is Basil Bernstein, who argued that some working-class adolescents are limited in their stylistic speech range to a ‘restricted [speech] code’¹⁰ which, whilst suitable for in-group communications, is not appropriate for more formal speech situations (Macaulay, 2005). This restricted code is characterised by short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences, a poor syntactical construction with a verbal form stressing the active mood; simple and repetitive use of conjunctions (*so, then, and, because*); frequent use of short commands and questions; rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs; infrequent use of impersonal pronouns (*one, it*); and statements formulated as implicit questions (Macaulay, 2005: 41). In contrast, middle-class adolescents, through their socialisation, are able to shift into an ‘elaborated [speech] code’ which is better suited to formal situations.

Kerswill (2006) cites studies that have looked for evidence to support Bernstein’s theories and have identified differences in the way working- and middle-class people organise their speech. But their findings are open to more complex interpretations than the deficit view implicit in Bernstein’s terminology. Wodak (1996, cited in Kerswill, 2006) found that when working-class people were asked to retell a news story, they were less factual but more personal; Bedisti (2004, cited in Kerswill, 2006) found that

¹⁰ Bernstein originally referred to these with the less emotive terms ‘formal language’ (elaborated code) and ‘public language’ (restricted code) (Bolander and Watts, 2009: 155).

working-class children used more exophoric references whilst middle-class children were more explicit; Macaulay (2002, cited in Kerswill, 2006) found that middle-class participants used more adverbs than working-class participants but found that this was related to the working-class speakers struggling to relate the stories to their own lives rather than simply 'reproducing the story in a disinterested way in a manner they are not trained to do', as the middle-class speakers did; and Cheshire (2005b, cited in Kerswill, 2006) found that the working-class adolescents she observed had a more collaborative approach to conversation whereas middle-class speakers were task-focused. These findings suggest that any differences between social groups in the way speech is organised is more to do with social conditioning than deficit and the issues arising from linguistic differences are problematized by those in positions of authority and not by those with different linguistic habits.

Although the social background differences described above are significant, they are not always insurmountable and pupils from working-class communities can still find the social space to become aspirational against the prevailing cultural norms. For some of these, their parents may encourage them to invest in their education, whilst others are personally driven to achieve educational success because they affiliate more strongly with pro-educational socio-cultural groups.

Jackson and Marsden's (1986) studied what he termed the 'sunken middle-class'. These were families who were living in working-class communities, but had been middle-class in previous generations and still retained middle-class practices and aspirations. These parents were more likely to invest their time and effort in supporting their children with their education. Similarly, Reay (2009) described an 'upper stratum' of working-class parents who place a high value on education (often against the

prevailing community culture). Pupils in these homes may encounter competing influences whereby parents promote education as a route towards a better life whilst others in the wider community place a higher value on gaining practical skills over academic achievement.

2.5 Bottom up social factors: adolescent peer groups and friendship groups

The discussion so far shows that home culture and community embeddedness are likely to motivate and influence pupils in the development of their attitudes to school. But, as the pupils in this study are adolescents, there is an additional variable which is very likely to motivate and influence them, and that is the friendship groups they cultivate in school. Throughout adolescence, the influence of parents and the local community will reduce as friendship groups become the dominant cultural reference point. Widdicombe & Wooffitt (1995: 17) describe how adolescents break away from the culture of their parents and communities:

They ... negotiate space for their own culture within the parent class culture. The spaces they win include territory like street corners, time and space for leisure and recreation, and occasions for social interaction – the weekend, the disco, football matches, or standing about doing nothing. In this way, they both create autonomy and difference from parents but also maintain the parental identification which support them.

This conceptualisation shows how pupils choose their friendship groups under the influence of their home culture and their community embeddedness. This captures an important point about the choices pupils make in regard to their friendship groups and

attitudes to school: while these decisions appear to be free, they are in fact constrained by the social exposure pupils gain at home and in the local community.

The latter years of secondary school represent a particularly dynamic period of rapid change and development fuelled by a 'drive for autonomy or independence from parental authority and the need for bonding with members of one's peer group' (Taylor, 2001: 298). Secondary schools 'squash' pupils from different backgrounds and with different attitudes together – and they break apart through the stylistic choices they make (Moore, 2004).

The attitudes that pupils develop to their school represent one of the most obvious factors in influencing pupils in their construction of identities in the classroom. At its most basic, this can be seen as a cline with those who recognise school as an opportunity to gain the necessary skills (and qualifications) to give them a springboard into a successful career at one end, and those who resent and resist the authority of the school at the other. However, there are many factors which tug these competing attitudes one way or another.

Over the past thirty years a number of researchers have successfully gained entry into teenage friendship groups and mapped the attitudes and behaviours of the individuals involved. One of the earliest and most influential was carried out by Willis (1977). By winning the trust of a group of disaffected working-class boys in their final years at school, he was able to describe their culture and the bonds that tied them together. Willis found that the 'Lads' (as he named them) seemed to be acutely aware of the distinctions between themselves and other groups, particularly the 'Ear'oles', the pupils who tried hard at school and wanted to do well. The Lads revelled in their shared

identity as an anti-authoritarian in-group with their own set of values and codes and this was often defined in opposition to the out-groups they resented; the Ear'oles but also the teachers. In explaining why he felt superior to the Ear'oles, one of the Lads says:

we've been through all life's pleasures and all its displeasures, we've been drinking, we've been fighting, we've known frustration, sex, fucking hatred, love and all this lark, yet [the Ear'ole]'s known none of it (Willis, 1977: 16).

Willis's study showed the power that group membership can have over an individual and it showed how a group who appears to suffer from social disadvantages can generate confidence and self-esteem by setting themselves up as a counter-force against the prevailing authority. But the study is over thirty years old and the social conditions which facilitated the Lads' culture have largely been dismantled. In many ways, the Lads' confident opposition to authority – a key component of their identity – was borne of an era which is no longer the norm: there was an abundance of working-class jobs for them to move into when they left school.

In their critique of more contemporary studies, O'Donnell and Sharpe (2000) found that modern students, including working-class students, largely accepted the value of education – although that didn't mean they bought into it. Instead, some working-class friendship groups were already building their social identities away from the school. They talked of a 'real world' outside the school gates which was thought to lie in their shared leisure activities or in paid work. Adolescents in their study cited several social arenas which, for them, had more cultural influence than school, including their immediate friendship groups and wider youth culture (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 4). Working-class masculine cultural traits such as reciprocal in-group loyalty and

suspicion and mockery of out-groups are at their 'rawest' in secondary schools because behaviour has not been tempered by the constraints of family and work (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 14). However, they also believe that the situation has changed over the past thirty years. With the decline of industry, the sense of security traditionally enjoyed by working-class men has gone. Few contemporary pupils in their study expressed the contempt for education seen in Willis's study (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 46).

Cheshire (1982a) carried out an ethnographic study in which she met with a group of adolescent boys at a park where they congregated. Over several months she was able to gain their trust and tap into the individual attitudes they held, which she then correlated with language use. Like Willis, the friendship group Cheshire followed had anti-authoritarian views and saw themselves in opposition to the authority of the school (in fact they were often playing truant when she met them). Part of Cheshire's method was to identify the group's core values, which were: skill at fighting, carrying weapons, participation in minor crime, wanting to have a 'good' job (eg slaughterer, lorry driver, mechanic or soldier), swearing and being stylish (hair, clothing etc).

As well as identifying the common traits which were seen as sources of in-group pride, Cheshire observed differences in behaviours within the in-group. Firstly, all of the boys used more nonstandard speech features in the playground than at school. This shows two things. It shows that the boys were aware that different levels of standardness were appropriate in different environments. But it also shows a link between standardness and formality because the more formal school setting elicited the most standard style of speech. Cheshire found that the 'baddest' boys (those who indulged in the core values most heavily) always used more nonstandard features than the least bad boys.

But there were interesting distinctions in the way the boys' attitudes to school influenced their use of nonstandard speech. She found that the boys who said they hated school the most used more nonstandard speech in school but those who enjoyed school hardly ever used nonstandard features at school. This even extended to the teachers the boys liked or didn't like: one of the 'baddest' boys, Noddy, was found to increase his use of nonstandard features with one of the teachers he disliked the most. This type of shift fits in with Giles (2001: 195) theory of 'divergence' where speakers adopt language features designed to signal disaffiliation to outgroups or to open up social distance between themselves and their interlocutor, in this case, particular teachers at school.

In her ethnographic study, Eckert (2000: 2-3) explored two opposing adolescent friendship group cultures in the suburbs of Detroit, the 'Jocks' and the 'Burnouts'. Rather than rely on top-down social categorisations, Eckert developed methods to tap into bottom-up identity constructions. Tellingly, she believes that these bottom-up constructions generally map onto the top-down pattern of social groups to show that the socialisation children receive has a profound impact on the identities they go on to construct: the Jocks were typically middle-class and the Burnouts were typically working-class. In her study, the Jocks were described as 'prototypical institutional beings': they bought into the education system, submitted to its authority and conformed to its requirements. They sacrificed the freedom enjoyed by the Burnouts for the long-term benefits of a good education (Eckert, 2000: 140). In contrast, the Burnouts viewed school with animosity and resentment and attempted to minimise their integration into the school system. For example, they typically didn't do many extracurricular activities (Eckert, 2000: 156) believing that it wasn't 'cool' (Eckert, 2000: 181). They minimised the time they had to spend in and around school and were

‘forced’ outside it in order to engage in illicit activities such as smoking (Eckert, 2000: 62). The Burnouts also attempted to flout the school dress code, particularly through small-scale acts of resistance such as wearing coats in class. The traits adopted by the Jocks and the Burnouts highlighted a fundamental difference between middle- and working-class pupils: working-class pupils seek peer approval; middle-class pupils seek adult approval (Eckert, 2000: 55).

Linguistically speaking, Eckert, like Cheshire, found that pupils who hadn’t bought into the education system tended to use more nonstandard speech whilst those who invested in their education used a language style which was more formal, more standard and more acceptable in school. Eckert also found gender differences between her participants which, at first glance, conformed to expectations: females led the use of formal, high-prestige language use whilst males led in the use of localised, nonstandard and informal, low-prestige speech. But within each gender group there were some interesting findings. For instance, the most hard-core girls, termed the ‘burned-out burnouts’ by Eckert, led in the use of negative concord showing that they were more attuned to its power and utilised it more effectively in the construction of their identities (Eckert, 2000: 459).

The group dynamics in English schools, whilst similar to that of Detroit, have some differences. The Jocks (conformist, largely middle-class pupils) of Eckert’s study enjoyed the most prestigious status in the school hierarchy but in many English schools, this is not the case. In many comprehensive schools in England, conformist middle-class pupils can attract negative terms such as ‘ear’oles’, ‘poufs’, ‘nancies’ and ‘do-gooders’ (Willis, 1977: 14 & 38), ‘geeks’ (Moore, 2004, See and Arthur, 2011: 153)

and ‘swots’ (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 44). The nonconformist groups often appear to be more confident and self-assured than the conformists.

But researchers should be careful to avoid focusing on the extremes to the detriment of the middle-majority. This is a trap that both Willis and Eckert could be accused of falling into. Moore (2003), consciously tries to give due regard to the ‘inbetweens’-pupils who are neither the most disaffected nor the most conformist – and, as a result, paints a more nuanced picture of the ways in which most pupils occupy the space between the two extremes. As a result, Moore’s study offers a better understanding of the way pupils ‘pick’n’mix’ their engagement with the school in ways which cut against expectations. For example, in her study some ‘Pops’, a friendship group made up of disaffected working-class pupils, took part in extracurricular activities whilst some Eden Village girls, mostly middle-class, tended not to do so because they lived further away from the school and were reliant on parents to give them lifts home. Pupils, Moore believes, must be seen as individuals if we are to unpick the complex motivations, interests, limitations and considerations that mitigate their involvement in school.

2.6 Pupils’ self esteem

Before finishing this chapter, I will explore the claim that the Requirement can adversely affect the self-esteem of some working-class pupils through the denigration of their home dialect and, by association, their home culture. Philip (2011) says:

For some, this linguistic tension may be a central cause of their growing disaffection with, and rejection of, the school – precisely because language and identity are so closely bound up together.

Cox (1991: 28-30) acknowledges that '[t]he profound implications for pupils' relationships with their families and communities should be recognised' when teachers think about how to embed spoken SE. He expands on this subject in 'The National Curriculum in English' (Cox, 1994: 88) when he says that damage to self-esteem and motivation can be caused by indiscriminate correction of dialect forms and that 'all children should be supported in valuing their own dialects'.

But, as Snell (2013: 124) observes, there is currently little evidence of 'damage getting done' in UK classrooms. Willis's (1977) 'Lads', Cheshire's (1982) Reading gang and Moore's (2003) 'Townies' are presented as confident and proud users of their NSDs, sometimes to the point where they feel that their culture is better than more conformist groups (such as the 'ear'oles' depicted in Willis's study). Their rejection of education suggests that they would be impervious to criticisms about their speech from teachers and it seems unlikely that their self-esteem would suffer as a result. These studies give no indication that these pupils, who are embedded in confident working-class friendship groups with a strong sense of identity, are sensitive to challenges to their speech – although speech is likely to be a resource used in their battles with the school (as evidenced in Cheshire, 1982, Eckert, 2000 and Moore, 2003, for example).

The situation, however, is likely to be different for conscientious, conformist pupils. Hudley and Mallinson (2011: 46) report the cases of white people in the American Deep South who were persuaded that they needed to lose their local dialects if they wanted to be accepted in US educational institutions, reporting that once the dialects were gone they felt a 'deep cultural loss'. Snell (2013) reports that in a situation where pupils believed their nonstandard speech might be pointed out by their teacher, a minority of

them (two out of eleven) chose to stay silent and not contribute to classroom discussions so that they wouldn't face criticisms. And even having made the decision – against prevailing cultural attitudes – to embrace the educational opportunities before them, some pupils feel they have to construct 'an elusive successful learner identity' (Reay, 2009: 27) to succeed. Reay (2009: 27) quotes a working-class pupil who says: 'In the classroom I am not myself. I am hard working and everything. In the playground, yeah, I'm back to my usual self ... just being normal'. Here is a recognition that, unlike many middle-class pupils, some working-class students need to 'transform their identity' in order to succeed.

The situation for pupils who make the decision to leave their home community can be even more fraught with problems. Here, there are clear risks for the individual which could cause damage to their self-esteem if they were to become isolated from their home group and possibly rejected by the target group. O'Donnell and Sharpe (2000: 42) cite a study into working-class boys who went to grammar school but who, under the pressure of 'negative labelling', 'drifted back to their own cultural roots'. Whilst empirical evidence for this is difficult to find, there is strong anecdotal evidence of the damage which can be done in these circumstances and these case studies show how intricately bonded linguistic features, social identity and community solidarity and pride can be. For example, a BBC documentary followed two Oxbridge students from working-class backgrounds who aspired to be Conservative MPs. These students affiliated more with highly aspirational middle-class people and were motivated to leave their own community in pursuit of high aspirations and ambitions but it was clear that this had taken a huge emotional toll on one boy in particular. He became very emotional as he talked about his experience in the Oxford Union Conservative Association:

Every time I'd speak at the debating forum ... I'd stand down and then I'd get, "Ee by gum our lad, Ilkley Moor, pork pie." They probably meant it as banter but when you have an entire room doing that, it eats away at your confidence. So I changed my accent; I dulled it down, I weakened it. I feel like I've betrayed who I am by playing by their game, you know, by having to hide who I am just to fit in their warped reality. Why should I have ever done that? (for an article about the programme, see Pomeroy, 2012).

The salient identifying feature of his background appears to be his speech but clearly have wider identity and community associations. His capitulation in the face of these attacks appears to have had a profound impact on him, leaving him emotional, weary, bitter and confused. He talks about 'betraying who I am' and 'having to hide who I am just to fit in', showing that the need to change the way he speaks has had a deep impact on his sense of personal identity, and he goes on to question why this should be demanded of him. At the end of the documentary, after an acrimonious split from the Union he reveals his anger at having been forced to play a role, rather than being allowed to be himself, saying defiantly, 'This is where I reclaim my identity now.'

This example – extreme as it may be – shows the risks involved in moving away from a close-knit community and towards a group with higher social status. It also underlines the intricate links between speech, social identity, group affiliations and community solidarity/pride. Whilst this example supports the view that care must be taken in order to avoid denigrating home dialects, the confidence found among the nonconformist working-class pupils suggests that only a small number of pupils will be vulnerable to having their self-esteem damaged in this way.

2.7 Conclusion of discussion

This chapter began with a critique of the education system which, it is argued, has left many working-class pupils disenfranchised at school. By failing to invest in alternatives to a narrow academic curriculum many pupils are pushed through an education system which is inappropriate for their needs. They are put under pressure to achieve narrow academic outcomes and are strongly encouraged to aspire to leave their home communities behind – regardless of whether this is what they or their families want.

The next discussion showed a range of issues which are likely to influence pupils as they navigate their way through their adolescent years at school. To begin with, the home cultures people are born into have been found to exert significant influence over the attitudes they go on to develop and, again, there are social class issues at play. Pupils from middle-class homes are likely to benefit from a number of advantages over working-class pupils. Their parents are more likely to have had successful experiences at school and are therefore likely to ensure that their own children can see the benefits of educational success. Some ‘sharp-elbowed’ parents are much more likely to guide their children into the best schools but are also more likely to proactively imbue their children with the cultural capital which will lead to educational success. The messages these pupils receive at home will be reinforced in their wider middle-class community where educational success is a cultural norm.

Some pupils from working-class homes may also benefit from having parents who will try to instil a belief in the value of education but the messages received from these parents are more likely to be diluted by the prevailing community beliefs, making them

less likely to be successful. For those in the most deprived socio-economic communities, the norm is more likely to be apathy, puzzlement or even hostility towards education. Pupils from these homes will find it very difficult to resist their community's cultural norms.

Under the influence of their families and communities, pupils will seek out other likeminded friends at school and the influence of these friendship groups will be instrumental in consolidating and reinforcing their developing attitudes towards education.

In spite of the cultural differences some working-class pupils find between home and school, it is not clear that their self-esteem is likely to suffer if teachers are clumsy in their attempts to promote spoken SE. But there are risks for a minority of conscientious pupils who may withdraw rather than engage in school discussions because they fear criticisms over their speech style. The greatest risks are for isolated pupils who take the step to shift away from their home dialect and try to embed in an alternative social group. The case study referred to highlights the complex connectedness between speech, affiliations and identity and showed the risks involved in attempting the leap from one group to another.

For one specific group of pupils – un-academic, working-class boys – the factors discussed above can lead to a perfect storm of forces raging against them: less pro-school home cultures; less pro-school community norms; a narrow, academic curriculum which gives little value to their skills and aspirations; a focus on achieving academic targets; the loss of typically masculine manufacturing jobs; a narrower range of behavioural norms and tighter reinforcement of those norms. When other things are

equal, boys have been found to use more localised speech features, they can be less linguistically dextrous, less successful at using language symbolically and have poorer verbal reasoning skills than girls. Whilst such boys may be content to disaffiliate from the education system, their presence in school is likely to lead to increased friction, animosity and hostility.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL METHODOLOGY

Having set out the social and educational backgrounds relevant to the study, this chapter will outline the theoretical frameworks which guided the methodology. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the method to give context to the discussions which follow. Social constructionism, the overarching theory used to direct the method, is explored, and theories of identity are discussed. The next discussion, on language and identities, will show how identity theories can be used to explain the use of certain linguistic variables. Motivating factors such as local pride, in-group membership and the need for authenticity are explored. Technical aspects of the linguistic theories – linguistic repertoire, style, crossing, indexicality, voicing and loading – are tied to these motivating factors.

3.1 Overview of Method

Data for the study was gathered in three¹¹ secondary schools with seventy-six adolescent pupils in Years 8 and 9 (aged between thirteen and fifteen). Nine pupils repeated the study in Year 9 after taking part in Year 8, giving me eighty-five sets of data in total. Pupils were withdrawn from their regular English lessons to take part in one classroom session per week for four weeks. Each session had two principal components: questionnaire completion and speech elicitation. The questionnaires were designed to generate social indices for each pupil across five areas: home culture, community embeddedness, attitude to school, friendship group culture and personal aspiration. The questionnaires mainly used Likert scales so that responses could be quantified, resulting in each speaker accruing a score out of 1.00 for each social index.

¹¹ A fourth school was involved at the start of the study but dropped out after one session. This is discussed in 5.3

Elicitation tasks were carried out which were designed to gather speech in three different situations:

1. Small Group Discussions (SGD)
2. Presentations where the speakers are speaking as themselves (HL)
3. Presentation where speakers are playing a role (LL)

(The concepts of HL and LL will be discussed in detail in 3.3) The SGDs were used to get pupils used to being recorded and to elicit supporting information to corroborate other findings. The LL presentations involved asking pupils to give presentations when playing a role which would typically involve speaking formal SE (such as a newscaster). The HL presentations involved pupils making classroom presentations when speaking as themselves. The speaking activities were transcribed and linguistic variables were quantified to give frequency indices for each pupil on each variant for HL and LL presentations. In addition, all activities had qualitative data elicitation methods embedded within them and this will be discussed in Chapter 4.

When the data was gathered, pupils were built up into four groups with different social profiles: a top-set group from a school in a middle-class area, a mid-set group from the same school, a mid-set group from a school in a working-class area with a dense community network and a mid-set group from a school in working-class area with a less dense community network. Data from each pupil in each group was combined to give comparable averages and analysis involved looking at differences and similarities between the groups.

3.2 Social Constructionism

The theoretical approach taken in this research was largely influenced by social constructionist philosophies. Despite its contemporary popularity, this can be a slippery term with different researchers approaching it in different ways (Burr, 2003: 2). It has been described as ‘a work in progress’ although there is a general consensus about its broad tenets (Lock and Strong, 2010: 6). Typically, social constructivists believe that:

[w]hat we take to be the world importantly depends on how we approach it, and how we approach it depends on the social relationships of which we are a part (Gergan, 2009: 2).

The Vygotskian view of social construction focuses on how it can be used to explain the socialisation of children. According to Lock and Strong’s (2010: 104) interpretation, infants are born into a dynamic world and are immediately bombarded with endless stimuli, like a person being dropped into the middle of a play without any knowledge of the script. Their challenge is to make sense of it all. This can begin when they acquire language and are able to listen, ask questions, learn and construct their own version of the reality going on around them. As they mature, they are able to discuss and evaluate what they see and hear and the responses to their engagement with their environment will, in turn, add to their stock of knowledge and experience in an iterative process of development.

The knowledge and experience that develop through social construction is of its time and place: for example, a person’s freedom to wear whatever clothes they wish will be restricted and circumscribed by the prevailing social norms. What is considered acceptable to wear in London will not be the same as in Beijing and what is acceptable

in London today will not be the same as it was in London a thousand years ago. This socio-cultural aspect of the stimuli will mould each individual to the norms of their communities. This has attracted criticisms for being a relativist concept: it is anti-essentialist and, therefore, has difficulties explaining the apparent existence of 'pre-existing motives, purposes and needs residing inside the individual' (Burr, 2003: 180). For example, a woman may believe that sexual relations with men are at the heart of women's oppression but be unable to quell her desire for a sexual relationship with a man (Burr, 2003: 180). If, as social constructionists teach, we take in social stimuli, make sense of them in the context of our socio-cultural environment and form views and opinions as a result, how can we explain the existence of overwhelming urges, desires and impulses?

The fact that these problems exist within the theory do not outweigh its merits, although it suggests that the theory is incomplete. Social constructionism offers a compelling conceptualisation of how pupils will have come to be socialised into certain communities and will have constructed their own social reality depending on their individual experiences. The theory can explain the individual differences which come about through differences in individual experiences and individual responses to them, but it also explains the similarities found within small clusters of friends, within wider school communities and within broad social and ethnic groupings.

Furthermore, I would argue that social constructionism can account for more than the internalising processes of social stimuli. As social stimuli are internalised into individuals they are processed through their cognition and are then externalised in the form of the identities being constructed. In this regard, social constructionism facilitates the development of social identities – the topic of the next discussion.

3.3 Theories of identity¹²

In 1.3, I referred to media reports claiming that some adolescents have become unemployable because of their limited abilities to communicate effectively. In each of these reports, speech was singled out as the main issue but a closer examination shows that the focus on speech is misplaced and that the real issue is about identity presentation. For example, in a television debate, historian David Starkey claimed:

A substantial section of the [white] chavs have become black....A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion. Black and white, boy and girl operate in this language together¹³.

The invocation of the term ‘chavs’¹⁴ and the description of ‘violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture’ implies that his analysis is based more widely on the identities these youths are presenting though Starkey sees the narrow issue of language use as the most salient manifestation.

Several studies have (implicitly or explicitly) drawn on the concept of identities to show that speakers are influenced in their linguistic repertoire by their social environment and their sense of self (see, for example, Giles and Coupland, 1991 on accommodation theory, Hogg and Abrams, 1988 on social identity theory, Milroy, 1987 on social network theory, and Scherger and Savage, 2009 on cultural capital theory).

¹² Whilst the concept of identity can be ascribed to abstract entities, such as groups of individuals (eg. political parties or biker gangs), I will be using it only to refer to individuals.

¹³ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAGTE_RGN4c

¹⁴ It should be noted that when Starkey uses the term ‘chavs’ he emphasises it and points to Owen Jones, a fellow guest on the show, in acknowledgement that the term comes from the title of Jones’ book

Furthermore, issues of identity construction are never more acute than during adolescence (Garrett et al., 2003). As adolescents construct and develop their identities, researchers consistently find that their use of linguistic variables can be a strong indicator of attitudes, allegiances and aspirations (Cheshire, 1982b, Eckert, 2000, Moore, 2004). Below the concept of identities will be fleshed out by reviewing two theories, Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Identity Theory.

SIT was specifically developed with a focus on both the individual and society. It aims to understand the psychological reality of social groups and the social identities that are derived from group membership (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995: 37). SIT was originally defined as ‘the individual’s knowledge that [they] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to [them] of the group membership’ (Tajif, 1972: 31, in Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 7) although more recent theories also take account of the impact of self-conceptualisation (Terry et al., 1999: 284) and affiliation – the *desire* to belong to a group or the feeling that one shares certain attitudes and values with particular groups (Coupland, 2007: 110-111).

The theory is in line with Symbolic Interactionism Theory, which suggests that the ‘self arises and then is constantly modified through life by interaction between individuals’ (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 15). Individuals see things in terms of ‘we-groups’ and ‘out-groups’, based on their own self-conceptualisation and these cognitive processes serve to simplify and help us to evaluate events so that we can pattern experience and provide direction to behaviour. If we didn’t have these, it is argued, we would be paralysed by overstimulation (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 16). Social groups fulfil individual and societal needs for order, structure, simplification and predictability (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 16-18). Affiliations to social groups typically lead to distinctly ‘groupy’

behaviours – solidarity within the group, conformity to group norms and discrimination against outgroups (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 3). The theory posits that individuals signify their allegiances, affiliations and aspirations to groups through their behaviour and the stylistic choices they make, including the way they dress and speak – and speech becomes particularly significant in English secondary schools where dress is usually governed through a uniform code. These affiliations (and ‘disaffiliations’) can motivate stylistic shifts towards (or away from) an interlocutor in order to reduce (or increase) social distance between speakers (Coupland, 2007: 130).

SIT has been criticised on a number of points: it underplays individual agency (*personal identity*) by explaining actions as responses to in-groups and affiliations; it appears to deny the existence of a ‘true self’, instead appearing to propose that we have multiple selves which are each triggered in different situations; and the concept of ‘social identity’ has been criticised for being too vague and not adequate to explain the relationship between the individual and the group (Reicher et al., 1995). The theory is rooted in a conflict model: it is adversarial, it focuses on differences between groups and it down-plays the impact of individuality and personal chemistry in group dynamics.

Alternative conceptualisations, such as Identity Theory, offer a less adversarial and more individualistic view of identity. Identity theorists believe that:

the core of an identity is the categorisation of the self as an occupant of a role, and the incorporation, into the self, of the meaning and expectations associated with that role and its performance (Burke and Tully, 1977, cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 225).

Here, identity is not focused on in- and out-group dichotomies but is rooted in the concept of the adoption by individuals of social roles. According to Identity Theory, through the course of our lives we inhabit and absorb various roles, the culmination of which makes each of us unique. In the same way in which we inhabit roles, we expect others to fulfil social roles as well. Within groups, through our expectations of role-fulfilment, we ‘negotiate and perform’ roles and this creates ‘micro-social structures’ (Stets and Burke, 2000: 227). Rather than seeing individuals as group members, Identity Theory sees each member of a group as having ‘interconnected uniqueness’ (Stets and Burke: 2000: 227) because of their individual experiences and attitudes. This view seems better able to account for intra-group differences between members.

It might seem at first glance that Identity Theory would find it more difficult than the SIT to account for inter-group tensions. However, that is not the case. Identity Theorists would argue that as part of our role negotiation, we become affiliated with various in-groups and become tuned into the tensions that exist between the in-groups and various out-groups through the process of socialisation. In turn, we expect members of the out-group to be similarly socialised into an opposing position and may form social stereotypes about them on this basis.

Identity Theory perhaps feels better suited to today’s individualistic society where people are not so tightly bound into social groups, where boundaries between groups are more permeable than they used to be and where relationships between groups are perhaps not as adversarial as they once were: the social clarities which allowed previous groups, such as punks, mods and teddy boys, to feel contempt for the out-group are not so clear today. With its focus on the individual, Identity Theory also seems more in

keeping with the ethnographer's view of identity – but this focus perhaps leaves it poorly placed to explore the social groups that are of interest in studies such as this one. Variationist studies feel intuitively closer to SIT than to Identity Theory because they are interested in inter-group differences. However, the two theories are not mutually exclusive and each of them can help us to understand the motivations which lead to the construction of specific identities and how they relate the individual to the social.

Together, these two theories show us that identities are borne of our heritage and upbringing and are based on our interpretations of our place in the societies in which we are socialised. They both account for affiliations and allegiances and are able to explain the dynamics which motivate behaviours towards other individuals and groups.

The next section will look at how language plays a major role in the construction of identities.

3.3.1 Language and identities

The earliest explanations about the maintenance of low-prestige linguistic features were put forward by Labov in his SSEN NYC (Social Stratification of English in New York City) study (Labov, 2006: 402). He wanted to understand why, if adopting high-prestige forms conferred such obvious advantages on speakers, not all speakers adopted them. In explanation, he coined the term 'covert prestige', which he described as the use of low-prestige variables which are designed to signal solidarity with low-status working-class groups as a counter-culture to speakers who might adopt high-prestige features to show affiliation to high-status groups. Trudgill (1975: 17) likewise believed that the need to maintain a respected social position within a low-status group could explain the retention of low-prestige features, arguing that speakers who change over

to a high-prestige variant in their speech could be seen as ‘letting the side down’ by their community. A child, Trudgill (1975: 57-58) suggests:

will not want to change [their] accent¹⁵ unless [they] also wants to reject the social group to which [they] belong or unless [they] want to change [their] identity in some way.

This suggests that speakers – especially nonstandard speakers – are under pressure to maintain the speech styles which are accepted as authentic within their social and cultural groups. The need for this authentic style creates linguistic boundaries which speakers must stay within if they are to avoid the attention of other group members, and this is where the concept of speech repertoire can aid our understanding of the limitations of linguistic options.

Stylistic speech repertoire is defined by Wardhaugh (2005: 131) as a situation where a speaker ‘controls a number of varieties of a language’ and this variation can be used to vary style in order to present identity. Coupland (2007: 82) offers the analogy of a wardrobe (or closet) in which a number of outfits are available to choose. The wardrobe is likely to contain clothing which reflects a person’s tastes and personality and as well as containing clothing across a range of formalities and which are suitable for a range of different social functions.

However, in the same way that individuals face constraints in the range of clothes they would be allowed to wear without facing social sanctions – for example, a farm labourer

¹⁵ Trudgill makes no distinction between accent and dialect in this regard

would be likely to face social sanctions if he dressed for work in the clothing more typical of a city banker (or vice versa) – we are likewise constrained in the linguistic stylistic ranges which are available for us to use as social resources. For our self-identities to be seen as legitimate they must be built on the foundations of our ‘ethnic¹⁶ inheritance’ (Rampton, 2010a: 506-508) – they must be seen to fit in with the norms of the communities we are known to have been enculturated into as we grew up; or as Coupland (2007: 83) puts it, ‘a speaker’s stylistic latitude derives from and is contained by the social variation visible in the community’. That is to say; the audience will expect the identity to be consistent with the history of the speaker as they understand it.

The role of identity in the stylistic use of language can be explored by looking at Rampton’s ‘crossing’ theory and Bakhtin’s concept of ‘stylisation’. Rampton’s (2010a: 485) phenomenon of crossing is defined as:

[linguistic] code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language that they are using (code switching into varieties that are not generally thought to belong to them)

and Bakhtin’s (1981: 362) earlier notion of ‘stylisation’ refers to ‘an artistic image of another’s language’. For Bakhtin (1986: 89) there is a continuum that we shift along in terms of the amount of our speech that is our own:

¹⁶ Rampton (2010: 486) discusses linguistic ‘ethnicity’ in regard to ‘the distinctive patterns of language use acquired in the early years at home and in local community networks’, a definition which can be applied to white working-class communities.

our speech is filled with other's words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness".

This account of stylisation implies a sliding scale in terms of the amount of 'our-own-ness' which contrasts with Rampton's concept of crossing, with its imagery of a 'line to be crossed', but at the core of both theories is a belief that we have a speech style which encompasses our self-identity – and, more importantly, that speakers can only deviate away from this for certain stylistic purposes. In this discussion I will use Rampton's 'crossing' term to refer to both crossing and stylisation for purposes of consistency and because I believe the notion of crossing is the most appropriate metaphor to use in regard to taking someone else's speech style.

To extend Coupland's 'wardrobe' metaphor, crossing involves wearing clothes taken from someone else's wardrobe and Rampton assigns a variety of strategic and tactical motivations, for example:

- Black and white British speakers using Panjabi terms to affiliate themselves with the identities associated with local Panjabi speakers (Rampton, 2006: 160);
- A switch to 'posh' to mark physical weakness, distance, constraint and sexual inhibitions or 'Cockney' to mark vigour, passion and bodily laxity (Rampton, 2006: 342);
- Pupils adopting 'Stylised Asian English' when making a request for a lift in a car (*we want lifting* or *you could take me in your car?*) to unsettle or destabilise established power relations (Coupland, 2007: 140).

Crossing foregrounds the speech style by deviating away from the expected speech norms in the socio-cultural environment. It can be marked out from those norms through a range of techniques:

- increased density in the co-occurrence of marked phonetic features
- sometimes accompanied by marked grammar or lexis
- by the quotative verbs ‘say’ or ‘go’, introducing reported speech
- by abrupt shifts in some combination of loudness, pitch level, voice quality or speed of delivery
- formulaicness in lexis and pragmatic function
- evocation of stereotypical characteristics of the social personae which they are being portrayed (Summarised from Rampton, 2006: 262)

However, successful instances of crossing in Rampton’s study are restricted to certain informal situations: ‘during verbal jokes and ritual abuse, listening to music, banter with the opposite sex and repartee with adults in authority’ (Rampton, 2010a: 492). Similarly, other researchers acknowledge that opportunities to move outside legitimate speech styles are restricted to a small set of instances, including mimicry and mockery (Ervin-Tripp, 2001), during bouts of verbal play which can be playful or malicious, and can include acts of teasing, put-downs or the use of irony (Coupland, 2007: 114) and during role play (Cheshire, 2005b: 2348).

But not all instances of crossing are successful and when it goes wrong, the consequences can be serious and painful. Edwards (2009: 97) reports terms coined specifically to insult people whose linguistic style strays beyond what their ethnic

inheritance allows: a *vendido* ('sell-out') is a Mexican term for someone who chooses to adopt English over Spanish whilst someone preferring English in Quebec would be labelled *vendu*, ('sold'). Repercussions can be particularly harsh for working class males: Edwards (2009: 71) reports a study from the mid-1970s showing that Cockney boys who talked 'posh' would be labelled 'queer' and Milroy (1987: 60) reports a Belfast youth being mocked, shouted at and punched when he diverged from the vernacular speech norms in the presence of his friends. He immediately converged back to them. Coupland (2007: 89) describes such style-shifting as 'a highly charged and risky business, subject to social monitoring and threatening further sanctions when it "goes wrong"'. Rampton (2010a: 507) found that:

a sense of anomaly was always close at hand whenever [adolescent] crossers moved outside the identities displayed in habitual vernacular speech.

In fact, charges of inauthenticity appear to motivate animosity towards speakers whenever they are felt to deviate away from the speech styles associated with their cultural inheritance. For example, when David Beckham was felt to be 'talking posher' there was a backlash across the mainstream media with headlines such as *The Beckhams have changed their accents to sound less working class* (see, for example BBC, 2013, Letts and Maguire, 2013). I suggest the animosity he stirred up was, in part, because of the discrepancy between his working-class background and the middle-class background that is congruent with people who speak 'posh'. But this cuts both ways: whilst Beckham was criticised for trying to talk posh, George Osborne, the privately educated British Chancellor of the Exchequer, was been criticised for trying to sound less posh (Walters, 2008). Beckham's change in accent prompted the Sun to run a story mocking celebrities who they accused of changing their accents. The tone of the article

is scornful as the celebrities were described as having ‘ditched their original voices’ to adopt ‘downright bonkers celebrity twangs’. The accents adopted by the celebrities are described as ‘bizarre’, ‘plummy’, ‘bumbled’ and ‘bonkers’ whilst George Osborne is tellingly accused of ‘forget[ting] his roots’ (Docherty, 2013).

The common thread is that people will often attract criticism for using speech features that are not congruent with their cultural inheritance because they will be deemed inauthentic.

When attempts at crossing go wrong it is often because the speaker is thought to be making claims of authenticity in the identity they are presenting which are not seen as legitimate by their audience. In ‘successful’ instances of crossing, there tends to be an understanding that the speaker is not staking claims of authenticity in the speech style they are adopting. So there are limitations to the speech styles that we are free to adopt – unless we are prepared to forfeit authenticity and/or to face social sanctions from our peers.

This raises questions about why people should react with hostility against a speaker just because they appear to have a mismatch between their identity and their speech style. Loyalty and pride are strong values in close-knit communities and deviations away from the local speech norms can be interpreted as the presentation of a disingenuous identity, a rejection of the community’s values and an act of disloyalty. Set in this context, the Requirement seems doomed to failure. For pupils from working-class backgrounds, the Requirement will mean they have to cross into an alternative identity in order to speak SE but as this discussion has shown, the risks of crossing can be serious, which means that only the most highly motivated person would attempt it. Someone proudly

embedded in a close-knit working-class community, I suggest, is extremely unlikely to have such a strong level of motivation.

3.3.2 ‘Meaning-making’

This raises questions about how pupils become aware of the stylistic variables that are within (and outside of) their ethnic inheritance – and why this become particularly salient during adolescence. Eckert (2000: 14) believes that pupils discover the linguistic options available to them through a process of innovation, experimentation, rehearsal and negotiation when they become immersed in the ‘heterosexual marketplace’ as teenagers. This is a dynamic period of culturalisation through which pupils begin to break away from parental influence and forge their own identities. School is a vibrant social hub and pupils are engaged in a permanent cycle of rehearsing and negotiating dozens of topics daily through their interactions with each other on a myriad of topics: the park, cruising, teachers, peers, the school, the future, musicians, sports, fashions (Eckert, 2000: 177). It is through social successes and failures during their engagement in these discussions and negotiations that they construct and refine their school identities (Eckert, 2000: 177). In this marketplace, adolescents construct and refine their identities in order to maximise their own value through a variety of symbolic resources such as dress, attitude, musical taste and language.

But although Eckert paints a picture in which linguistic resources are used dynamically, the situations which give rise to the manipulation of linguistic forms is complex: different speech features have different levels of salience to both speakers and hearers and the connotations embedded in different features will be different for different speakers and hearers. Furthermore, people in the marketplace are not equally disposed to respond to linguistic variation and some marketplaces are more dynamic than others

in terms of the number of variants that are salient and the levels of variation that occur. Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) studied the salience of /aw/-monophthongization in a Pittsburgh speech community. This feature was felt to be indexical of local Pittsburghese speech to the extent that it featured on t-shirts, mugs and in local dialect books and could be considered a stereotype in Labov's terms (Meyerhoff, 2011: 22).

Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) described the type of exposure which can result in heightened salience to a speech feature through the concept of *n*th order indexicality (where *n* stands for *number*), a concept based on Silverstein's description of the links between forms and meanings as 'orders of indexicality' (Meyerhoff, 2011: 22). In Silverstein's account, speech variants which become associated with social meaning achieve first-order indexicality. So when /aw/-monophthongalisation became associated – by hearers – with Pittsburghese, it took on the status as a first-order indexical variable. But, at this stage, it wasn't necessarily salient to the speakers themselves: although Johnstone and Kiesling found that many people in the local community were well aware of the feature and felt that it marked local identity, those who expressed this view were not necessarily the ones using it. Furthermore, they found that half of the people using the feature didn't seem to be aware of it and couldn't pick it out from other variants (Johnstone and Kiesling, 2008: 6). A similar situation was evident in my own BA research where rhoticity was considered a very salient feature of the local area by people from outside the speech community but many local rhotic speakers were oblivious to it (Austin, 2007).

When speakers did begin to recognise the feature as being indexical of Pittsburghese and to use it to present a Pittsburgh identity, the feature had achieved *n*+1-th-order indexical status: a speaker might accentuate their use of monophthongal /aw/ when it was socially

advantageous to draw attention to their Pittsburgh identity but might drop its use when it was disadvantageous. In other words, the feature was being used stylistically in the construction of identity. But Johnstone (2010: 34) describes the process of ‘enregisterment’, whereby features take on indexical meaning, as being open to myriad interpretations depending on, among other things, a person’s ideological views: different speakers can use a particular variant to send out different signals – and these can be interpreted differently by hearers. Eckert (2008: 646) similarly warns us that the pool of individual interpretations can be diverse. People experience a word or phrase, make sense of it and develop an understanding of what it means. During each subsequent encounter with the word or phrase, further construal is possible so that the indexical meaning is constantly reinterpreted on an individual basis. The ideological meaning attached to a variable can be very different to speakers, even if the speakers share the same upbringing and enculturation. Johnstone (2010: 35) offers the example of women hearing local features as sloppy, ugly and uneducated whilst men may hear them as loyal, friendly and masculine.

Myers-Scotton offers a simpler explanation about the use of localised speech features through her ‘markedness model’. She posits that in a linguistic community speakers can choose from marked and unmarked variants (Gross, 2009: 69). The unmarked variant is that one that would be expected in a social situation by that speaker at that time. A marked variant would involve a departure from the expected norm and this would be assessed as signalling an attempt by the speaker to somehow change the dynamics of the exchange. In most situations the speaker will not want to depart from the expected norm and will, therefore, use the unmarked form. In the Pittsburgh example the speaker may maintain the monophthongal /aw/ because it is their norm and

deviation away from it would mark it as salient. They might opt for the marked form when they want to project their local identity.

One of the problems involved in reaching the correct interpretation of the motivations which influence speakers is their linguistic choices is that the speaker and researcher will have their own unique (and sometimes different) experiences of the variable and each variable will be imbued with different levels of salience to speakers and researcher. This means that a researcher might mis-infer that a salient feature is being used stylistically to project identity when, in fact, the speaker meant to make no such inference and the feature was not salient to them. Researchers must, therefore, guard against inferring links that may not be there. Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) refer to this as the ‘intentional fallacy’: the fallacy of attributing [researchers]’ interpretations to [speakers]’ intentions¹⁷.

3.3.3 Voicing and loading

Two more factors are relevant to this discussion and are key to the conceptualisation I present as central to my hypothesis that self-identity can constrain linguistic style: ‘voicing’ and ‘loading’. I will combine these terms with Rampton’s notion of crossing to offer an account of the mechanisms which inhibit style-shifting towards high-prestige speech.

‘Voicing’ refers to ‘how a speaker represents or implies ownership of an utterance or a way of speaking’ (Coupland, 2007: 114). When we speak, we can project our own voice or we can project the voice of another and this is what Bakhtin (1986: 89) meant

¹⁷ This is a term they attribute to literary criticism which refers to ‘readers’ and ‘authors’ rather than ‘researchers’ and ‘speakers’.

when he referred to ‘varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of “our-ownness”’.

‘Loading’ refers to the ‘level of a speaker’s investment in an identity being negotiated’ (Coupland, 2007: 114). If a speaker is engaging in role-play, for example, the voice will have a low level of loading – they have not invested very much, if any, of their own identity. If, on the other hand, they are speaking sincerely – ‘from the heart’ – then a high level of loading is evident and they will have invested their own identity heavily in the voice. A ‘high load voice’ would be one in which there is likely to be a congruence between the self-identity being performed and the speaker’s ethnic inheritance – this is what gives the voice authenticity. Conversely, a ‘low load voice’ would be one where it appears that the speaker has not invested their identity in the voice and is adopting a speech style which is inconsistent with their ethnic and cultural inheritance. In consequence, it may be regarded as inauthentic.

This extrapolation from these concepts forms the rationale for my methodology. If they are correct, then pupils playing a role will be freed from the constraints of their cultural inheritance because their self-identity will not be loaded onto the voice (it will have a low self-identity load). But when pupils are speaking ‘as themselves’, the voice will be heavily loaded with their self-identity (it will have a high self-identity load). In this instance, listeners will expect to see a congruence between the speaker’s cultural inheritance and their linguistic style, otherwise, charges of inauthenticity may be levelled at the speaker. We should then expect to see linguistic differences between speech with a high (‘own voice’) and low (‘role play’) identity load. These two distinct types of speech are what I describe as HL (High Load) and LL (Low Load).

3.4 Conclusion of discussion

In this chapter I have set out some of the most influential theories and studies which informed my research methodology. SIT and Identity Theory seek to explain the motivations which inform identity construction. The SIT theory suggests that we view the world in terms of in- and out-groups and that we generate strong affiliations to the in-groups to which we belong. We signal these affiliations by conforming to the social symbols inherent in our groups and deviations away from these norms can result in social sanctions being imposed by the group. Identity Theory suggests that we adopt roles consistent with the social expectations placed on us in our communities.

Identities are performed through the stylistic choices we make in everyday interactions, but these choices are made within social constraints: the identities we construct must be in line with our ethnic and cultural inheritance if they are to be accepted as authentic (unless they are playfully performed). And our knowledge about authenticity derives from our socialisation (as outlined through social constructionism).

The impact of identity becomes apparent when we look at the phenomenon of crossing. Inherent in this theory is the belief that we have a self-identity which is bounded by the communities we grow up in – and we are under pressure to conform to the norms of those communities. Crossing theory explains how some speakers cross the boundaries of their authentic identity to temporarily take on alternative identities as acts of stylisation.

The stylistic decisions we make can be explained through the process of enregisterment, which shows that we have all had a unique set of exposures to linguistic variables and that this conditions each of us to respond to, and use, variables in particular ways.

Through our socialisation we come to recognise that certain variables have certain social meanings attached to them and – if it is consistent with our ethnic inheritance – we will have these available to use as linguistic resources. The markedness model predicts that we are naturally inclined towards using the unmarked form, unless we deem it socially advantageous to deviate away from it.

But these rules only apply if the ‘voice’ we present is our own. The concept of ‘loading’ suggests that when we speak authentically, our identities are loaded onto the voice. But when we do not speak authentically (for example, when we play a role), they are not. If this is true, then we will have a greater range of linguistic possibilities when our identities are not loaded onto the voice because we are not subjected to the linguistic constraints which are embedded in our communities.

So how does this affect pupils making classroom presentations? The NC requires that pupils should speak SE in order to achieve the higher grades. The discussion in 1.4 showed that the definition of spoken SE can be muddled and that pupils would need to use formal high-prestige features if they are to avoid being judged as nonstandard by many teachers. For middle-class pupils there is a strong likelihood that the requirements of the S&L activities will be consistent with their social identity and with the speech features inherent in their home dialect. But, for some working-class pupils, the features inherent in their ‘authentic voice’ will include low-prestige variants. Their sense of social identity may also make it difficult for them to adopt features associated with an out-group. In this situation, working-class pupils would be required to ‘cross’ into an alien identity in order to adopt the required features and, as discussed above, this is difficult to achieve except in playful situations.

This discussion, therefore, shows the dilemma which can confront working-class pupils when making classroom presentations. Their options are to forfeit their authenticity and style-shift towards formal high-prestige speech features in breach of their cultural inheritance in an attempt to succeed at the task; or to forfeit their opportunity to achieve the highest grades by maintaining the features consistent with their ethnic and cultural inheritance. My intuition is that the social constraints are so powerful that some pupils will not even recognise this as a choice: the idea of accommodating to the requirement for formal high-prestige features will not even cross their minds.

CHAPTER 4: QUESTIONNAIRE AND SPEECH ELICITATION DESIGN

In this chapter, the two fundamental aspects of the research will be set out: developing the questionnaires designed to generate social data, and planning the speech elicitation tasks. The chapter begins with a discussion of the methodology chosen for the study – mixed methods. Issues around the development of social indices and the measurement of attitudes are discussed before I explain the process by which the statements were created. In the second part of the chapter, I describe the development of the speech elicitation tasks.

4.1 Mixed methods

Several of the researchers that have influenced and shaped my thinking around this thesis have adopted an ethnographic approach: people such as Willis, Eckert, Moore, Rampton and Snell. But my own early influences were Labovian variationist sociolinguists such as Trudgill and Kerswill and I am drawn to the high levels of control that well-designed variationist studies can offer. My area of interest, classroom presentations, is carried out in a controlled environment, which is well-suited to variationist methodologies, but I also wanted to be able to explore individual or small group idiosyncrasies. This led me to develop a hybrid methodology which attempts to take the best of both sets of methods – ethnographic and variationist – even those these are drawn from distinctly different research traditions. Below I will review quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and explain how I aimed to develop a mixed method which maximised the advantages of each, whilst minimising the disadvantages.

Dörnyei (2007: 33) suggests that quantitative methods are ‘systematic, rigorous, focused, tightly controlled’. Robust statistical significance techniques have been developed over many years for quantitative methods, meaning that findings have high

levels of validity and reliability. Quantitative methods can also reach very large numbers of participants in a short space of time because they use efficient methods such as questionnaires and then process the data using computer programs. The findings from quantitative studies can often be generalised beyond the immediate scope of the particular study and are felt to be more objective than qualitative data (because any such findings are often derived from mathematical formulae).

But these advantages come at a cost. Quantitative methods have traditionally been focused on linguistic variables rather than the speakers who use them, so such methods can miss the (subjective) variability between individuals. By focusing on collective data, they can iron out the nuances of the situations being investigated, giving them limited capacity to explain what is going on. Because quantitative methods are often tightly designed before they are implemented, researchers tend to come with pre-conceived notions about what they will find: they usually set the parameters of their research in advance by specifying what measurements they will take and how the data will be processed. This means that they are restricted in what they are looking for and what they can find. Opponents of quantitative methods argue that they are ‘simplistic’ and ‘decontextualized’ (Dörnyei, 2007: 35).

Qualitative methods overcome many of these shortfalls. One of the biggest attractions of qualitative methods is that they are ‘emergent’: researchers typically begin their studies with an open mind as to what they might find, meaning that they are less likely to miss out on important explanatory factors. These studies will often occur in a setting where naturally-occurring phenomena can be observed, recorded and analysed. Qualitative studies often treat research situations in a holistic manner, rather than focusing on precise aspects of a number of variables. Proponents of qualitative methods

argue that they do not seek ‘correct interpretations’ of events (as, they argue, quantitative methods do) but ‘broaden out the repertoire of possible interpretations’ (Dornyei, 2007: 41). These methods are much more flexible than quantitative methods because they are not fixed in advance, meaning that they can be adapted to flow with the direction of any findings that emerge.

But this means that qualitative studies can be extremely labour-intensive and potentially inefficient: researchers can spend weeks gathering data and do not know at the outset whether their time will have been well spent. They can be idiosyncratic, which greatly reduces their generalisability. The methods need to be bespoke and can lack rigour. The labour-intensive nature of qualitative methods means that they do not lend themselves to large scale studies.

This research project used mixed method involving a combination of established quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods were used to generate empirical evidence which could point to areas for further investigation using qualitative methods. This approach was adopted for a number of reasons. In quantitative terms, the linguistic variables being investigated – formal, prestigious speech features – were broadly understood in advance of the project being developed and quantitative methods are particularly well suited to projects where variables are known in advance (Dornyei, 2007: 26). I wanted the research to be robust and part of this involved gathering quantitative data which could be tested for statistical significance. This in turn dictated that I gathered larger amounts of data than would be necessary for a typical qualitative study. Finally, I wanted the research to have a high level of integrity and one way to ensure this is to generate a methodology which can be replicated and empirically tested.

But in order to expand my explanations of individual acts of ‘meaning making’, I needed to be able to home in on individual acts in context, and qualitative methods are better suited to achieving this. I wanted to keep an open mind about what I might find as the study progressed so, although I did have some preconceptions about the variables which might be interesting, I made sure that I captured enough data so that I could explore any unexpected (emergent) findings. The presentation topics the pupils were asked to speak on would also allow me to analyse speech qualitatively, rather than being restricted to crunching variables and looking at them in isolation. My method had to generate enough personal data for each pupil so that individual case studies could be explored.

At the development stage, I could not predict how the balance between qualitative and quantitative methods would work out and I wasn’t sure which direction the study would take. That is, I wasn’t sure whether the most interesting analysis would be qualitative or quantitative. Because of this uncertainty, the methodology had to ensure that I gathered enough data to keep both options fully open.

4.2 Developing the questionnaires

Development of the questionnaires proved to be extremely labour-intensive. It involved many stages and a constant cycle of development – testing – revising – redeveloping. In this section, the concept of social indices as measurement tools will be explored, as will the problems associated with measuring attitudes. The development of the social indices and the statements will then be discussed.

4.2.1 Social indices and Likert scales

Several researchers have developed social indices, which aim to differentiate participants on a social topic. They are made up by identifying a small number of criteria against which participants can be rated, often by being given a binary score. These scores are then totalled so that each participant accrues a total score for the index. In her study, Cheshire (2005b: 2-3) developed a 'vernacular culture index' in which a group of adolescent participants were scored according to their level of participation or engagement in six 'vernacular' criteria:

1. Skill at fighting
2. Carrying a weapon (such as a knife or a chain)
3. Participation in minor crime (such as vandalism or arson)
4. 'Attractive' jobs (jobs deemed attractive by the group included slaughterman and lorry driver)
5. Style
6. Swearing.

Cheshire measured her participants using the Guttman scale method, which involves allocating a score of 1 or 0 to each participant depending on their levels of participation or engagement in these activities and then ranking them according to how many points they had accrued. She then divided the boys into four groups and looked for correlations with linguistic features. She was able to show that boys who were the most deeply embedded in the vernacular culture were also the ones who most frequently used certain speech features which appeared to index membership of the group, such as multiple negation and relative *what*.

Milroy developed a similar method for her Belfast study with her Network Strength Scale (Milroy and Margrain, 1980: 51). Like Cheshire, she gave participants scores of 1 or 0 depending on whether they adhered to a set of five network density measures, which were:

1. Membership of a high density, territorially based cluster.
2. Having substantial ties of kinship in the neighbourhood. (More than one household, in addition to her or his own nuclear family).
3. Working at the same place as at least two others from the same area.
4. The same place of work as at least two others of the same sex from the area.
5. Voluntary association with work mates in leisure hours. This applies in practice only when conditions three and four are satisfied (Milroy and Margrain, 1980: 51).

By doing this, she was able to correlate embeddedness in the local community with the use of linguistic variables.

In these two examples, participants were scored by the researcher and this was possible because of the small number of participants in the studies. In studies with a small number of participants a large amount of speech can also be elicited from each participant. However, in my study, constraints of time and access to pupils meant that I would not be able to gather the volume of speech from each participant that Cheshire and Milroy were able to elicit. Rather than gathering a lot of speech from a small number of participants, I therefore needed to gather a smaller amount of speech from a larger number of participants (relative to these ethnographic studies). This would make

it difficult for me to assign social index scores for my participants so my preferred method was to present statements in questionnaire form for pupils to complete themselves. This is in line with the constructionist approach taken in this study, whereby pupils are given the freedom to construct their own identities as part of the methodology.

I also felt that the binary scoring system used in these studies was a blunt tool and that alternative methods might facilitate more nuanced responses. Likert scales seemed to offer a way for my participants to score themselves and also to allow scores to be gathered along a scale, rather than on a binary distinction. Likert scales have been developed specifically to give participants the ability to signal their strength of feeling towards a statement. They involve presenting participants with statements and offering them a number of choices in how much/little they agree with them. Most scales will offer between five and seven options, such as: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree (Babbie, 2001: 819). Responses can then be scored according to the strength of feeling shown in the response: *Strongly disagree* might score 1 point whilst *Strongly agree* scores 5.

This was the preferred method of Marshall (2004), who developed several indices built around responses to statements scored by strength of agreement. For example, his ‘mental urbanisation’ scale offered the statements:

1. I notice what people are wearing in Aberdeen. I like to keep up with city fashion.
2. I mostly watch TV programmes about city life and avoid nature/environmental programmes.

3. I would like to follow a career in a city rather than one where I work in the country or a small town around here.
4. I think it is very important to own a PC or at least have access to one at school/work.
5. I would love to move away from this area to the city.
6. When I am in Aberdeen, I feel at home and unstressed by the crowds and traffic.
7. City folk are just as friendly as anyone, and are basically the same as country folk.
8. I never eat brose or any traditional meals. I prefer modern/international dishes.
9. A good education, getting on in life, and having all the modern equipment and appliances is more important than quietness and having a good family life.
10. I'd rather spend a day in Aberdeen playing computer games and shopping than spend it walking up Bennachie with friends and family

with scoring attributed as follows: 0 strongly agree; 1 agree; 2 neutral; 3 disagree; 4 strongly disagree (Marshall, 2004: 112).

Whilst this study offers the precedent of combining social index statements with Likert scales, there are several flaws in the construction of the statements which served as a lesson in the development of my own statements. Many of the statements refer to two or more separate things, for example, in statement 10 participants are asked to choose between, on the one hand, being in Aberdeen playing computer games and shopping and, on the other, walking up Bennachie with friends and family. But what if participants enjoy Aberdeen but not playing computer games or shopping? Or if they like walking up Bennachie, but only on their own?

A better example is offered by Scherger and Savage (2009) who developed a social index to assess how much cultural capital children's parents imbued them with during childhood. In regard to how often parents took their children to culturally enriching activities, they asked the following question:

When you were growing up, how often did your parent(s) or other adult(s) take you to ...

museums or art galleries

theatre, dance or classical music performances

sites of historic interest

libraries.

Options were offered as: never; less often than once a year; one or two times a year; less often than once a month but at least three or four times a year; at least once a month; don't know. Scherger and Savage offered questions, rather than statements, and offered different time ranges, rather than simple clines of agreement, but this method provides a precedent which I felt I could adapt to suit my purposes.

Developing social indices through the presentation of statements/questions and using Likert scale methods to allow for strength of feelings, I felt, was particularly well suited to my study. With such methods there is a heavy investment in the development of the questionnaires but once this is done the data gathering requires very little face-to-face time or effort with participants. In addition, the method offers total consistency in wording and presentation, it can be carried out with a large number of participants and it is readily quantifiable. For the participant, although it requires a basic level of reading

skills, it is very easy to understand, doesn't require much explanation or instruction and it can be completed quickly and easily.

Despite these advantages, Likert-scale methods have been criticised on a number of fronts. There is an assumption that pupils will read and interpret the statements in the same way as one another but this is unlikely to be the case. For instance, in the question used by Scherger and Savage which asks how often participants were taken to 'theatre, dance or classical music performances', there could be differences in what participants include in this category. Should annual trips to a local pantomime be included? What about a local youth club where a weekly disco is held? Pantomimes and discos will not be the type of high cultural activity envisaged by the researcher, but it would be impossible to know whether participants counted these in their responses or not.

A further criticism of the Likert scale method is that participants can only respond in a linear way to the statements and yet there is no proof that such linear distinctions exist (Oppenheim, 1992: 175). In reality, these options may not capture the true situation. In the example just discussed about trips to the theatre, dance or classical music performance, there may be participants whose parents used to take them but due to changes in family circumstances, no longer can. They may have moved farther away from theatres they used to visit, parents may have lost their job or may have split up. There may have been an excellent local theatre group nearby which has since closed or the participant may have stopped wanting to go. All of these scenarios happen in everyday life but Likert scale methods cannot adequately capture them.

There are also concerns about the scoring method because when clusters of statements are quantified, there is an assumption that each one is equal. To use the Scherger and

Savage example again, the question (about museums/galleries, theatre/dance/classical music, historical sites and libraries) are clustered into a single index to measure the cultural capital that parents imbue their children with, and responses to each statement carry equal weight in the index. This means that pupils whose parents take them regularly to the library but not to the opera are deemed to have the same level of cultural capital exposure as pupils whose parents take them to the opera but not the library, which is debatable. It is difficult to overcome these issues although it would be possible (theoretically, at least) to give a weighting value to each statement so that it contributes to the total in accordance with its perceived value – but such calculations would be subjective.

One of the criticisms in giving participants the chance to score themselves is that it is built on a premise that responses will be honest. The school studies discussed in Chapter 2 established that acts of subversion can be common among nonconformist pupils. However, there are techniques which can identify whether pupils are responding consistently in their questionnaires and these will be discussed in Chapter 5. This method also assumes that participants have a formed opinion, or attitude, about the statements which, again, might not be the case and this will be the topic of the next discussion.

4.2.2 Attitude measurement

The very concept of ‘attitude’ is contentious and the use of attitudinal measurement raises many issues: about how attitudes relate to behaviour, how robust they are and whether they can be meaningfully measured. Even the definition of attitude is contentious with different theorists and researchers having different ideas about its

meaning. Oskamp and Schultz (2005: 7-9) summarise some of the most significant definitions used over the past century, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Sample definitions of "attitude" (Oskamp and Schultz, 2005: 8)

1	COMPREHENSIVE: An attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Allport, 1935: 10)
2	SIMPLE: Attitudes are likes and dislikes (Bem, 1970: 14)
3	EMPHASIS ON EVALUATION: An attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993: 1)
4	EMPHASIS ON LEARNING AND CONSISTENCY: An attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975: 6)

Oskamp and Schultz conclude their discussion with their own definition:

An attitude is a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given attitude object (Oskamp and Schultz, 2005:9).

Whilst this statement takes many of the best points from the four definitions, I prefer Allport's description of an attitude 'exert[ing] a directive or dynamic influence' to Oskamp and Schultz's 'respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner'. The latter phrase seems linear and simplistic in comparison. But Oskamp and Schultz's notion of an 'attitude object' is a clear and logical concept. In light of this discussion, I will set my own definition of attitude as follows:

An attitude is a psychological predisposition (which can be learned or can be the product of a process of evaluation), which exerts a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to a given attitude object.

Whilst this definition could also be accused of pushing the search for meaning onto ‘predisposition’, it captures the essential components of an attitude: that it is borne out of learning or evaluation, that it influences responses and that it is fixed on something. This definition was used as a guide in the construction of the attitude statements to be presented in the questionnaires.

Even with this guiding principle, the development of the attitude statements was not straightforward and there were many considerations to be made and pitfalls to be avoided. Oppenheim (1992: 178) states that attitudes are ‘rarely the product of a balanced conclusion after a careful assembly of evidence’ but according to Olson and Fazio (2009: 23), this only applies to ‘weak’ attitudes. They distinguish between attitudes which are impulsive or flippant (which they describe as ‘weak’) and those which are the product of considered thought (which they describe as strong). Oskamp and Schultz (2005: 13) advise researchers to try to avoid tapping into weak attitudes because ‘there may be occasions when a participant does not have an attitude about a particular topic but can easily construct one on the spot’. So wherever possible, statements should target strong, rather than weak attitudes in order to minimise the risk of gathering attitudes built on weak foundations.

But even if the attitude is deeply rooted and robust, other factors could affect the way participants respond to an attitude statement, such as a person’s mood or their stress levels (Cargile et al., 1994: 218-219). This is obviously problematic. For example, there is a risk that an unpleasant experience with a teacher prior to one of the sessions could influence how a pupil responds to questions about their teachers.

Then there are issues around how individuals might respond to questionnaires. Oppenheim (1992: 181) highlights different personality types which may affect how a person completes a questionnaire. People inclined towards ‘social desirability’ may try to second guess what they think is the socially responsible way to respond, rather than answering them honestly. Whilst this may be an issue in some research environments, for this study, where pupils are being encouraged to construct and present themselves, it is appropriate that pupils are allowed to make these considerations.

4.2.3 Developing the indices and the statements

The discussion in the first two chapters showed that a varied range of features is likely to influence pupils in their identity construction and their choice of language in school. One of the first steps in designing the methodology was to try to identify the most important of these social variables. Below, the five social variables developed into social indices are discussed.

The first two social variables selected were *community embeddedness* and *friendship group culture*. My decision to develop indices centred on these variables was based on the influential studies of Milroy (community embeddedness) and Willis, Cheshire, Eckert and Moore (friendship group culture) showing that these are significant variables in predicting linguistic style (see 2.5). The *community embeddedness* index I developed was similar to Milroy’s in that it was designed to measure how deeply participants were embedded in the local community but the fact that participants in my study were school children obviously changed some aspects of the index; these will be discussed in 4.2.4.

The *friendship group culture* index was focused in a different direction to the index developed by Cheshire. Because the purpose of my index was to predict attitudes likely

to facilitate engagement in school, my *friendship group culture* index was designed to measure whether the pupil's group of friends held pro-school attitudes rather than to identify the core values of friendship groups. That said, I included a section in the questionnaire which adopted a similar line of questioning as Cheshire used, discussed in 4.2.4.

As well as having an index for *friendship group culture*, I also developed one for *attitude to school*. Whilst I felt that there would be a large overlap between *friendship group culture* and *attitude to school* (because we tend to find friends who share our values *and* because our values are shaped by friends), I thought there might be pupils who would be more or less pro-school than their friends. This index was made up of statements about engagement in school, whether they enjoyed school and what they thought of teachers.

The next index was concerned with *home culture*. This was largely influenced by the work of Scherger and Savage (2009) (see 2.4) showing how some parents proactively imbue their children with the cultural capital needed to succeed in school – and later life. This index also draws on the studies of Green and White (2007) (see 2.4) which show how families in poor socioeconomic areas are less likely to engage in their education. This index was designed to measure how likely it was that a pupil came from a pro-educational home background and so it could be expected to correlate with the *attitude to school* and *friendship group culture* indices.

Finally, I developed an index on *aspiration*. The discussion in 2.4 suggested that middle-class pupils are likely to be more aspirational than working-class pupils and I wanted to be able to test this. But also, the accommodation (Giles, 2001) and audience

design (Meyerhoff, 2011: 42) theories predict that aspirational working-class pupils might adopt the speech features of a social group they don't belong to, but aspire to join, and I wanted to be able to see if the aspirational working-class pupils in my study would adopt more high prestige features to this end.

Although I settled on these five indices, I also considered others, such as:

- *Attitude to speech*: to measure levels of accent and dialect pride and how important they felt it was to speak the right way.
- *Level of autonomy*: Miller (1958: 7) highlights autonomy as an important value among working-class 'delinquents'; Willis (1977) found that the 'Lads' in his study typically avoided adults; and Eckert (2000: 55) believed that whilst middle-class pupils seek adult approval, working-class pupils seek peer-approval which leads them into more autonomous recreational activities.
- *Attitude to risk*: studies show that boys are more likely to indulge in risky behaviour (Smith, 2010: 41); and Jones (2011: xxii) argues that a section of today's working-class teenagers feel they have no secure future to lose, leading to a willingness to take greater risks.

After consideration, these were rejected, though statements were included in the questionnaires which would enable me to comment on them, if appropriate. I didn't develop indices in these topics because I felt that the five indices I planned to develop would allow me to capture the most important factors likely to influence the construction of identities and the use of linguistic style during classroom presentations.

4.2.4 The statements

After deciding on the social indices I had to design statements which would contribute to them. The starting point was to think about what information would be important about each pupil for each index, based on a review of the literature. For example, in regard to the *home culture* index, it would be important to know whether the pupils' parents took an interest in their school work, but also whether their parents attended university and whether they proactively tried to imbue their children with pro-educational cultural capital.

Each index was built up from pupils' responses to a cluster of statements. Pupils were asked to agree/disagree on a six-point scale to each statement where each point would accrue a score. Scores from all the statements which made up an index would be added together to give an individual score for each pupil on each index.

The first challenge was in regard to the design of the attitude statements and in this I was guided by Oppenheim (1992: 174) who describes an attitude statement as:

a single sentence that expresses a point of view, a belief, a preference, a judgment, an emotional feeling, a position for or against something.

This was the benchmark against which all of the statements were evaluated. In terms of the clarity of statements, there are risks that poor design can result in statements which fail to hit their target. Marshall's earlier statements (see 4.2.1) highlighted the problems of including more than one issue in a single statement and this can result in a participant either not understanding what is being asked or misunderstanding and responding inappropriately.

A bank of statements was developed for each social index, based on what the studies suggested would be important points of difference for pupils with different attitudes. The original list of eighty-one statements was put through a rigorous period of testing, both before and after the data was gathered and processed, and only thirty-eight of them made it into the final quantitative analysis calculations. To begin with, a prolonged series of piloting and revisions was carried out (as recommended by Oppenheim, 1992: 48). A pool of teenagers was recruited who were willing to critique the statements. Each statement was assessed to see if it was likely to be weak or strong (in Oskamp and Schultz's, 2005, terms) by asking pupils if they had opinions about the topic of the statement or if they were having to develop one on the spot. Whilst many pupils responded to the statements quickly and fluently, for some pupils, some of the statements were thought provoking, suggesting that they were not tapping into deeply held attitudes but were of a weaker nature. But this also revealed differences in approach from participants: some were confident in their responses whilst others were indecisive. In response to this, I added some guidance about completing the questionnaires at the sessions. This was delivered verbally (as part of a plan to minimise the reading pupils had to do, thereby reducing ability to read as an uncontrolled variable). Pupils were asked to read each statement through, make sure they understood what it was asking, circle their level of agreement and move straight on to the next statement. I hoped this guidance would strike the right balance between encouraging them to engage properly with each statement without agonising too much and spending too much time weighing each one up.

I also tried to ensure that pupils had previously thought about each statement by giving some of them out as discussion prompts for the SGDs. This meant that by the time

pupils were asked about it in the questionnaire, they were more likely to have already thought about it and, in some cases, discussed it (SGDs were carried out in the week prior to the first presentations taking place). For example, I gave a discussion prompt in the SGDs asking pupils what they planned to do when they left school which, I hoped, would mean that by the time they were presented with statements asking about aspiration they would have recently thought about it and discussed it with their friends.

The process of pilot testing also resulted in some changes to the structure of some of the statements. Oppenheim (1992: 181) suggests that there should be an even number of positive and negative statements on each issue and, initially, I tried to achieve this balance but during the piloting stage it became apparent that some pupils were struggling to untangle statements which contained two negatives. For example the statement *I never cycle without wearing a helmet* confused some pupils because of the double negative aspect of it (ie *never* and *without*). Some pupils couldn't figure out whether to agree or disagree with it. But when this was changed to *I always wear a helmet when I cycle*¹⁸, there was no such confusion. In response, I went through all of the statements and tried to remove negative statements asking about negative points.

Having developed the bank of statements, further steps were taken to minimise the risks of getting fleeting, rather than robust, responses. The statements were split across four questionnaires and pupils were presented with one questionnaire each week for four weeks. This ensured that a pupil's mood on a single occasion would not skew all of their responses. Four statements were also taken from each of the four questionnaires

¹⁸ This statement was included even though the 'attitude to risk' index was abandoned. I left this statement in because responses in the pilot study was completely polarised and correlated with attitude to school.

and copied into one of the other questionnaires. This meant that sixteen of the statements were presented twice in different weeks so they could be checked for consistency of answers. These steps would help to ensure that responses were consistent and that factors such as mood were controlled for, to some extent. In addition to these measures, I would also be able to check the consistency of answer by looking for corroboration from the content of the presentations.

At this stage, I posted a request on a linguistics forum asking for linguists willing to read and critique my list of statements. This resulted in ten people offering to help me and the feedback they provided resulted in some changes. For example, one of the statements in the *home culture* index was originally *My parents make sure I do my homework*. It was pointed out that some pupils might not live with their parents or that someone else in the home might take on this responsibility and the statement was eventually changed to *Someone at home makes sure I do my homework*.

After amending the statements again, a final series of testing and tweaking was carried out until I felt sure that the statements were functioning well.

Each statement was given a positive or a negative weighting so that, when quantified, it would contribute appropriately to the index. For example, the statement *I'm well behaved in class* was positively weighted in the *attitude to school* index so that a person strongly agreeing with it would accrue the most points towards their total index score. The statement *I mess about in class* was negatively weighted so that someone strongly agreeing with it would accrue minus points towards their index total. The need for this is explained more fully in Appendix G.

Having described the process of development for the statements, I will present the final statements used to make up the five social indices. This makes up only around half of the statements generated and presented to pupils. The other statements were removed from the quantitative analysis for a variety of reasons through the testing and analysis process, which will be discussed in 5.4. All statements – with the exception of most of the *friendship group culture* statements (see below) – were presented to pupils in the four questionnaires under the heading ‘How do you feel about these statements?’ using the Likert scale method. The statements were presented next to a six-point cline with ‘agree’ at one end and ‘disagree’ at the other. Pupils were asked to circle the asterisk which best reflected their position. Figure 4.1 gives an example of how the statements were presented in the questionnaires.

How do you feel about these statements?	Disagree!	Agree!
It is important to my family that I do well at school	* * * * *	
Someone at home encourages me to read books	* * * * *	
I'm proud to live around here	* * * * *	
Lots of people around my area know my family	* * * * *	
I behave badly in class	* * * * *	

Figure 4.1: Example of the way the statements were set out in the questionnaires

Below, the statements for each index are presented.

4.2.4.1 Home culture

Table 4.2 shows the statements which contributed to the *home culture* index. Statements 1 and 2 ask about whether someone in the pupils’ homes takes an interest in their school work. Statement 3 is designed to probe whether the family pro-actively imbue their child with cultural capital. Statement 4 is designed to establish whether the

pupil comes from a home in which the parents have experience of higher educational success.

Table 4.2: *Home culture* social index statements

Number	Statement	+/- weighting
1	It is important to my family that I do well at school	+
2	Someone at home encourages me to read books	+
3	Members of my family take me to the theatre, art galleries or museums...	+
4	Do your parents have university degrees?	+

4.2.4.2 Community embeddedness

Table 4.3 shows the statements included in the *community embeddedness* index. All of these statements are designed to see whether a pupil has the type of deep, generational roots in the local community which have been found to correlate with a range of other variables, such as social class and attitudes to education (see Chapter 2). This index was problematic to design because there are lots of ambiguities in the terms. For example, ‘around my area’ and ‘near us’ do not specify how wide a circle the pupil should imagine and it is unlikely that pupils will imagine the same kind of geographical spread when responding to these statements. Similarly, ‘lots of people’ is unclear and responses are unlikely to have the same size groups in their mind when responding. I decided to accept the risks of these ambiguities but keep them in mind during the analysis phase of the study.

Table 4.3: *Community embeddedness* social index statements

Number	Statement	+/- weighting
1	Most of my parents' friends live near us	+
2	My parents know a lot of people near us	+
3	Most of my family live near us	+
4	Lots of people around my area know my family	+
5	Did your parents grow up around where you live now	+

4.2.4.3 Attitude to school

Table 4.4 shows the statements which contributed to the *attitude to school* index. The first and third statements probe very general behavioural and attitudinal approaches to school. Statement 2 also asks about broad attitudes to school, but within the context of the friendship group. Statement 4 is designed to see whether pupils have bought into the belief that educational success is a prerequisite to career success. Statement 5 probes the relationship between the pupil and the wider class. At the testing stage, this statement was found to polarise pupils and divide them quite starkly along (what I felt could be) pro- and anti-school attitudes.

Table 4.4: *Attitude to school* social index statements

Number	Statement	+/- weighting
1	I'm well behaved in class	+
2	In school I just want to have a laugh with my friends	+
3	I love school	+
4	School prepares you for your working life	+
5	If someone messes about in class you need to tell the teacher	+

4.2.4.4 Friendship group culture

Table 4.5 shows the statements included in the *friendship group culture* index. This index pot was different from the others because it was presented in two different ways. Statements 1 to 3 were presented to pupils using the same Likert scale method as used for the rest of the social indices statements. But the phrases in 4 to 11 were presented using a semantic differential scale, whereby two opposing adjectives were placed at either end of the scale under the question ‘How important are these things to you and your friends?’ The opposing adjectives were ‘important’ and ‘not important’. This list comprises mainly negative attributes, such as *causing trouble* and *answering back to teachers*, with only a small number of positive attributes such as *trying hard at school* and *having respect for the police*. This slant towards negative traits reflects the influence of Cheshire’s vernacular culture index, on which this part of the questionnaire was modelled. The change from Likert-scale to semantic differential scale was also used to vary the elicitation method in order to avoid boredom.

Table 4.5: *Friendship group culture* social index statements

Number	Statement	+/- weighting
1	My friends behave badly at school	-
2	Me and my friends like to roam around the streets in the evenings	-
3	My friends try to do well at school	+
4	Answering back to teachers	-
5	Rule breaking at school	-
6	Being able to drink a lot of alcohol	-
7	Causing trouble	-
8	Trying hard in class	+
9	Respect for the police	+
10	Skill at fighting	-
11	Smoking with friends	-

4.2.4.5 Aspiration

Table 4.6 shows the statements included in the *aspiration* index. The first two statements ask about focus and direction but it should be noted that responses to statement 2 might not reveal an aspiration which is likely to promote educational buy-in. For example, the ‘goals’ could involve becoming a professional sports person. Statements 3 and 4 are designed to see whether the pupil aspires to do a job which requires intelligence. Statements 5 and 6 probe attitudes to the best way to achieve wealth in life. These statements were included following my discussions with a group of pupils who expressed the view that they didn’t need to work hard at school because they believed it is possible to get rich by becoming famous through shows like *Big Brother*. Pupils agreeing with statement 7 are less likely than other to be motivated to invest in their education whilst those agreeing with statement 8 will be motivated.

Table 4.6: *Aspiration* social index statements

Number	Statement	+/- weighting
1	I have no idea what I want to do with my life	-
2	I have goals in life that I want to achieve	+
3	When I'm older, I expect to do a job where you need to be clever	+
4	When I'm older, I expect to do a job where you don't need to be clever	-
5	The best ways to get rich is to get famous	-
6	The best ways to get rich is to work hard at school	+
7	I just want to leave school as soon as I can	-
8	I need to do well at school if I'm going to achieve my ambitions	+

4.2.4.6 Summary of questionnaire development

During the development stage, several statements were changed, others were introduced and some were rejected and this left the index pots uneven. This represented a shift away from the order and precision I anticipated when I began the questionnaire

development, which was at the traditional quantitative variationist end of the quantitative-qualitative cline (clinical and tightly controlled), but which shifted towards the qualitative ethnography end (messier, more person-centred) as the methodology developed. Despite these imbalances, through completing the questionnaires, each pupil would be positioning themselves on each cline relative to the other pupils and this would allow comparisons to be made, correlations sought and analysis to be carried out.

4.2.5 Other questions

In addition to the statements contributing to these index pots, I gathered other information which could be used to flesh out other attitudes and characteristics of the pupils as follows:

4.2.5.1 Social class background indicators

Because my study is concerned with differences between pupils who speak SE and NSDs, it was important to capture information about the social class backgrounds of the pupils because it is likely that these will correlate with speech patterns. But whilst social class considerations are still influential in social science research studies, many believe they are a blunt tool in the wake of much more multifaceted methodologies. One of the main criticisms of using social class categorisations centre on the problem of identifying social class in the twenty-first century – especially in regard to ascribing it to children, who may not share their parents’ social class outlook. However, Abercrombie and Warde (2000: 145-146, cited in Rampton, 2006: 215) justify using social class categorisations because they act as ‘an incisive analytic tool for understanding inequality, social division and political change’ and serve as shorthand for a number of social differences: ‘family background, main source of income ... cultural tastes’.

I adopted Crinson and Williamson (2004) and Snell's (2010) methodology by identifying schools with broadly working- and middle-class catchment areas but within the groups of pupils captured at these differing schools, I needed to be able to confirm that the pupils were indeed from different social class backgrounds.

Modern theorists tend to use definitions of social class which focus on a combination of material, cultural or attitudinal features and Labov (2001, cited in Moore, 2011: 349) argues that 'a social class calculation that combines occupation, education, and house value is the most reliable indicator of sociolinguistic patterning'. For this study, with its focus on the impact of pro-educational home cultures and attitudes, it was important that definitions of social class captured levels of education and occupation because these, I felt, would be the most likely attributes to facilitate a pro-education attitudes in the pupils. For this reason, two questions were designed to indicate social class background: pupils were asked if one or both of their parents had university degrees and what their parents' occupations were. I felt that the question about occupations might be problematic because there would be some job categories which do not give insights into social class background, such as 'office worker', which could range from an office junior to someone in a much more senior position, or vague terms such as 'manager' which could similarly range from, for example, someone who manages a small charity shop through to a senior manager at a large company. Some pupils might also have only a vague idea about what their parents do for a living. Despite these issues, I decided to gather the information in this way and assess it at the analysis stage.

I avoided questions about house value though I could have asked for postcode information and used this to ascertain information about house values. I resisted this

because the questionnaires were going to be quite lengthy and I wanted to keep them succinct. I also knew of several locations where affluent homes were located beside areas of relative deprivation and I felt that the two pieces of information I was gathering would generate enough social class background information.

As a secondary indicator of social class background, I also asked pupils which newspapers were bought at home. The question was included in response to research showing that newspaper choice (in terms of broadsheets, quality dailies and tabloids¹⁹) have a significant correlation between Weberian social status and cultural level and lifestyle (Chan and Goldthorps, 2003). This suggests that the choice of newspaper can be a reliable indicator of social and cultural class attitudes and I thought this had the potential to offer an interesting angle on the cultural aspects of social class background.

4.2.5.2 Clubs; hobbies and interests; extra-curricular activities:

High levels of engagement in organised clubs are often shown to correlate with typically middle-class attitudes. For example, Crinson and Williamson (2004: 208) found distinctions between two schools in Tyneside selected because of their middle- and working-class cultures. In the middle-class school, pupils typically engaged in organised out-of-school activities such as rugby, ballet, tennis and badminton. Ethnographic studies into youth culture often find a distinction between youths who gravitate towards adult oriented activities and working-class youths who gravitate away from them (Eckert, 2000, Moore, 2003, O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000, Willis, 1977). That said, there are other factors which can affect participation in after-school clubs.

¹⁹ These three newspaper types are aimed at audiences drawn from different social groups. Broadsheets such as The Times and The Guardian are aimed at the upper- and middle-classes, quality dailies are aimed at the lower middle-classes whilst tabloids are aimed at the working-classes.

Moore (2003) found that some of her Eden Valley Girls²⁰ did not take part in so many after-school clubs because of the difficulties of getting home afterwards.

This information was requested in two parts. A section in the questionnaires asked pupils what clubs they belonged to and what their hobbies were. Separately, the back of Questionnaire 4 gave a list of afterschool clubs and pupils were asked to indicate which ones they currently attend and which ones they would like to attend, shown as Figure 4.2.

<p style="text-align: center;">After School Clubs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Underline what you do; Circle what you'd like to do</p>				
DVD Club	Trampolining	Boxing	Glee Club	Fitness Suite
Reading	Art Club	Creative Writing	Debating Club	Drama Club
Chess Club	Philosophy	Badminton	Film Club	Drumming
Survival skills	Football Training	Computer Club	Keyboard Club	Table Tennis
Newball	Cheer Leading	Rock Choir	Book Club	Climbing
Other (please state)				

Figure 4.2: Questionnaire form given to pupils to probe engagement with after-school clubs

This offered pupils the chance to affiliate themselves to different subgroups which would reveal aspects of their attitudes and personalities. For instance, a pupil listing several activities which were primarily intellectual (e.g. chess club, debating club) would be presenting themselves very differently than someone listing no activities or only sporting activities. The list of clubs presented to pupils was an amalgam of various activities offered at different schools.

²⁰ A middle-class community of practice identified among the cohort of a secondary school Year 8 and 9 group

4.2.5.3 Whether speech is corrected – and by whom

This question more specifically asked ‘Does anyone correct your speech?’ and a follow-up question asked ‘Who? And which features?’. By asking pupils these questions, several possible areas of interest were explored. This question could indicate whether pupils are subjected to speech correction by parents. It could also indicate whether teachers are involved in correcting speech – and, if they are, which features they focus on. It could also indicate whether pupils have been made aware of salient features of their own speech. The pejorative nature of this statement is problematic because it may direct pupils to negative comments about their speech, but I was unable to construct a more positive statement asking for the same information with the same clarity and succinctness.

Copies of the four questionnaires are attached as Appendix B.

4.3 Speech elicitation tasks

The other main component of the sessions involved recording the pupils. In any linguistic study involving the analysis of speech, decisions must be made about where to get the speech from. Researchers can use existing recordings from a speech archive, they can use a corpus derived from speech, such as the British National Corpus, or they can generate their own recordings. The specific requirements of my study – pupils making classroom presentations – meant that an existing archive would not have the type of speech needed to answer the RQs.

Most classroom presentations involve each pupil being given time to plan their talk and then being asked to come to the front of the classroom and deliver the presentation in front of the rest of the class. The obvious way to explore classroom presentations would

be to observe and record this but it would be unlikely to elicit the volume of speech required from each individual. In my experience as an English teacher, presentations are seen by teachers as an inefficient use of classroom time because whilst one pupil is presenting, the rest of the class is required to be attentive and respectful – which can also lead to behavioural problems. Many pupils are also reluctant presenters and often rush through their presentation in a couple of minutes. The needs of my study also meant that teachers would be unlikely to undertake presentation tasks which would elicit the data I needed, in particular, HL and LL elicitation tasks. It became clear that I would have to design a method outside of the authentic classroom situation in order to gather my data but, since my RQs investigate classroom presentations, any method would need to reconstruct as far as possible the authentic classroom experience. Considerations in regard to this are discussed in Chapter 5.

Where researchers have elicited speech (rather than, for example, using a corpus), they can vary along a cline depending on degrees of freedom. In Labov's (1972c) early studies, he relied heavily on the use of reading lists where participants were asked to read either single words or longer passages (for example, from a book). This method is highly efficient because the researcher does not gather too much peripheral (wasteful) speech and it gives the researcher a heavy level of control so that specific phonetic variables can be isolated and analysed. But the speech elicited cannot be used to analyse the use of syntax or lexis or features such as discourse markers because these are controlled through the design of the task. At the other end of the spectrum, Snell (2010) used radio microphones to record children at play in the school playground. This method captures language which can give insights into the linguistic choices speakers make in dynamic language environments. But the data captured is inevitably varied and uneven, limiting its capacity to be used to compare speakers' use of variables in the

type of controlled environment being investigated in this study. This method is also among the most inefficient because there will be times when the participant isn't speaking and other times of intense exchanges of quick-fire speech which can be difficult to decipher and which are very specific to context. Between these two extremes, many elicitation methods have been developed, for example: card prompts, storytelling (Garrett et al., 2003), structured interviews (Wray et al., 1998: 156) and role-play involving improvisations (Clarke et al., 2006).

The nature of my study meant that many facets of the elicitation method were dictated by the type of speech I need to gather; specifically, classroom presentations. Two methods stood out as being particularly suitable for my purposes and those were card prompts and storytelling. Both of these are well-established methods associated with formal presentations. Both of these methods would elicit free speech, rather than scripted speech, making them suitable for generating speech which can be analysed for grammatical constructions. But before I discuss the development of the presentation elicitation tasks, I will explain the design of the initial speech gathering method – the small group discussions.

4.3.1 SGD (Small Group Discussion)

The SGD task involved giving groups of three pupils a list of conversational prompts to work through, and recording their chatter as they sat together wearing headset microphones. It was also designed from the outset to fulfil a number of purposes: it would be the first elicitation task that pupils carried out so that they could get used to being recorded before they began making presentations. This would help to alleviate unfamiliarity as a potential uncontrolled variable when pupils did their first HL or LL recording. It would allow pupils to be recorded whilst speaking with friends (rather

than solo presenting), which would be less intimidating to begin with. It would allow me to introduce some of the attitudes I would ask about in the questionnaires to reduce the risk of generating fleeting attitudes towards topics on the spot. And it would generate qualitative data which could be used to triangulate data gathered through other methods.

For SGD activity, the most important thing was to design a task which would encourage fluent, informal speech. This isn't as easy as it may seem because the 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 2006: 86) tells us that the very act of setting up a microphone and switching on a voice recorder is likely to impact on a speaker's ability to produce fluent, informal speech. In order to minimise the chances of this, I decided to allow this speech to take place in small groups. In *The Logic of Non-Standard English*, Labov (1972b, cited in Macy, 2001: 369) showed how important the setting of a sociolinguistic encounter can be. He showed that when an inner-city black boy was interviewed by an educated white adult, the boy 'defend[ed] himself' and adopted a linguistic style characterised by 'monosyllabic expression and minimal response'. However, by making changes to the setting, for example, by allowing the boy to bring a friend into the interview, by having a black interviewer who sat on the floor beside the children and by allowing the children to enjoy a snack during the interview, the child became 'verbally enterprising and show[ed] no cognitive deficiency'.

With this in mind, I adopted the prompt card method of speech elicitation by developing a deck of cards containing prompts made up of words, questions and/or images designed to encourage fluent speech in small groups. This task involved a low cognitive load and was very simple for pupils to understand and carry out: pupils needed only to turn over the cards one-by-one and discuss what was on them. This activity also had the

advantage of giving an element of control to the pupils as they could spend as little or as much time on each prompt as they wanted to, which would help to facilitate a relaxed environment.

The design of these cards presented opportunities to embed data triangulation and qualitative data capture opportunities into the task. For example, by giving pupils prompts such as *Talk about what you do on an average evening*, responses would provide information which could corroborate data gathered in other parts of the study. Pupils might respond to this prompt by saying that they spent their evenings hanging around the streets or doing homework. This information could then be used to support (or contrast with) responses from the questionnaires asking about their levels of engagement with school. It would also allow me to build up a more nuanced picture of each individual for use in qualitative analysis.

However, as well as having prompts which would gather additional data from pupils, I felt that it was also important to include a mix of less demanding and more frivolous prompts, for example by asking about celebrities popular with young people. This would be less intrusive or threatening to pupils. I also thought that the opportunity to gossip about celebrities would be likely to generate fluent speech.

I designed a set of prompt cards and tested them informally with several groups of adolescents, inviting comments from them and ideas for other prompts which could be incorporated into the pack. This led to rewording on some cards to make them more straightforward and/or understandable and to the generation of prompts such as *McDonalds or Kentucky?*, *Eastenders or Coronation Street?* and *Hanna Montana or*

Suite Life of Zac and Cody? These prompts proved to be particularly effective in eliciting strong opinions delivered in fluent, spontaneous speech.

The method involved pupils working in groups of three to discuss the card prompts for thirty minutes, generating approximately ten minutes of informal classroom speech from each pupil. This method complemented the constructionist approach discussed in 3.2 because it allowed pupils to construct their identities as they responded to the prompts. The SGD elicitation tasks were carried out in the first of four classroom sessions and the list of prompts is attached as Appendix C.

4.3.2 Presentations

The speech prompt method was also used for the HL and LL presentations for a number of reasons. This seemed like the obvious choice because it fitted in well with the nature of classroom presentations. One of the strengths of the method is that the construction of syntax, lexis and phonology are the decisions of the speaker. This means that it can be used to study linguistic variability across all these levels.

The design of the presentation elicitation task was inspired by the Radio 4 show *Just a Minute*. This game involves four celebrity contestants who, in turn, have to speak for one minute on a given topic. I adapted it by creating a deck of cards for the presentation tasks whereby each card contained a speech topic which the pupils had to talk about for one minute. The cards were given out in advance of the task beginning (so that pupils could choose ones they felt they would be able to talk about). Pupils worked in friendship groups of three and there were five rounds of the game in each session. Examples of HL and LL card prompts are shown in Figure 4.3. Each prompt had a

bold, underlined title giving the topic for the one minute presentation. Below this, each prompt gave additional information which the pupils could use to guide them.

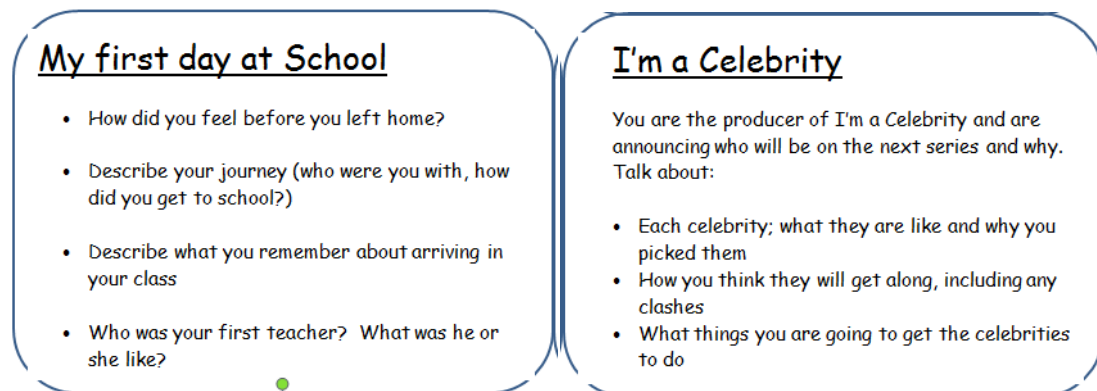


Figure 4.3: Examples of HL and LL prompt cards

This method offered many advantages. Firstly, it involved little or no preparation time for the pupils (meaning that more of the limited time available could be utilised eliciting speech): pupils could simply be given a deck of cards, be asked to choose five of them and then takes turns to talk for one minute. Secondly, it could capture additional qualitative data by giving pupils topics to speak about in line with the five social indices. Thirdly, the method would work for both HL and LL presentations: the prompts on the cards would be able to specify whether the task involved role play or speaking as themselves. This meant that differences in elicitation tasks could be reduced as a variable between HL and LL tasks. Fourthly, this method had the potential to elicit lots of speech from each pupil because it broke the presentations down into very small chunks of one minute each. The method was tested and proved to be very effective – though the development of the deck of prompts involved a lot of work.

But there were also disadvantages. When the wordings for the prompt cards were completed, there was an obvious problem with the number of words on each card. The LL cards needed to set out their scenario, which required more guidance than the HL cards and, as a consequence, they had more writing on them. This variable had the

potential to affect the data because any differences in speech style might be due to pupils having to read and process more information for the LL prompts. To rebalance this as far as possible, I went through all the LL cards and looked for opportunities to make them more concise. Then I went through the HL prompt cards and added information to some of them to even up the number of words between the HL and LL prompt cards. After this exercise, there was still an imbalance in the number of words between the two sets of prompts but it was reduced as far as possible.

4.3.2.1 Developing the presentation deck of cards

A list of presentation topics was developed by reviewing the studies discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and picking topics which, the studies suggested, might reveal issues of identity, group affiliations etc. These were discussed with the focus group of adolescents and refined into the prompt cards.

Table 4.7 shows the content of the HL prompt cards.

Table 4.7: HL prompts

	Prompt heading	Bullet points
1	My best holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did you go? How long for? How old were you? • Describe the place you stayed • Who did you go with? • Tell a story about what happened there • Say what made it special
2	Me and my friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name two or three friends and describe them • Say what you like to do together • Tell a story about something you did together

Table 4.7 cont: HL prompts

3	Around my area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us where you live and what it is like (eg small village, busy town) • Say what there is for young people to do • Say what activities you take part in • Say what you would like to be able to do
4	My hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe two or three things that you like to do • Say why you like them • Tell a story about doing each of them
5	A normal day after school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your journey home • What time do you have your meal? What might you have? • What do you do in the evening? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TV? Computer? What do you watch or go on? ○ Do you meet friends? What do you do together?
6	My life in ten years' time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of home will you have? • Who will make up your family? • What job will you do? • What interests and hobbies will you have?
7	My ambitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want to do when you are older? • Say why you have these ambitions • Describe the kind of life you would have if realise your ambitions
8	My favourite TV show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the show and say why you like it • Describe the characters • Tell us what happens in your favourite episode
9	My favourite singer/band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and describe them • Name and describe your favourite song • Say what they are like • Say what you like about them
10	My favourite film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the main characters • Describe the plot • Say why you like the film • Describe one of your favourite scenes

Table 4.7 cont: HL prompts

11	My first day at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel before you left home? • Describe your journey (who were you with, how did you get to school?) • Describe what you remember about arriving in your class • Who was your first teacher? What was he or she like?
12	My favourite lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which lesson? Why? • Explain some of the things you've learnt in the lesson • Describe a typical lesson • Tell us what you are studying in that lesson at the moment
13	Personal topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about any subject that interests you

The rationale behind each of these prompts is given in Appendix D.

As with the HL prompts, each of the LL prompts was designed to generate additional qualitative data. Table 4.8 shows the contents of the LL cards, the rationale for each of them is given in Appendix E.

Table 4.8: LL prompts

	Prompt heading	Bullet points
1	Smoking awareness counsellor You are a professor visiting a school to tell Year 7 pupils about smoking. Talk about:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effect smoking has on people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lungs, breathing, smell, fitness • Some stories about people who've smoked too much • What Year 7 pupils should do if they're offered cigarettes
2	Alcohol awareness counsellor You are a professor visiting a school to educate pupils about alcohol. Talk about:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effect alcohol has on people • Some stories about people who've drunk too much • Three different alcoholic drinks • How teenagers should deal with alcohol

Table 4.8 cont: LL prompts

3	<p>Police chief</p> <p>You are the new police chief giving a talk about how the police should deal with young people on the streets. Talk about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues there are around young people • Tell some stories about times you have met young people on the streets and what they were like • How you think the police should change the way they deal with young people
4	<p>After-school clubs organiser</p> <p>You are a teacher at school and have been put in charge of after-school clubs. You have been asked to speak at an assembly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details of three activities • Name and describe each one • Say why pupils should take part in them • Say where and when they will happen
5	<p>Youth worker</p> <p>You are starting a new youth club in the area and are giving a presentation to local teenagers about what will be offered at your club.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List three things they could do at your club • Tell them when the club will be open • Talk about three trips that you will run each year
6	<p>New head teacher</p> <p>You are the new head of the school addressing your first assembly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the pupils how the school will change now that you are in charge • Talk about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Behaviour ○ Dress ○ A new reward scheme ○ A new punishment system ○ After school activities
7	<p>Careers advisor</p> <p>You are a careers advisor giving a presentation to a group of young people who are about to leave school. Talk about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three jobs pupils might want to do when they leave school, tell them what each job entails • How to prepare for an interview: how they should dress, how they should behave

Table 4.8 cont: LL prompts

8	<p>TV Producer</p> <p>You are the producer of I'm a Celebrity and are announcing who will be on the next series and why. Talk about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each celebrity; what they are like and why you picked them • How you think they will get along, including any clashes • What things you are going to get the celebrities to do
9	<p>Mobile phone salesperson</p> <p>You are a salesperson giving a talk about a new mobile phone which claims to do everything! Talk about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media (Facebook etc) • Three games on the phone • New video chat function • Three of the best apps
10	<p>Charity appeal</p> <p>You are a charity worker making an appeal for money. Talk about:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name your charity and say what you raise money for • Tell a story about someone or something you have helped • Say how much money you want each person to give and what it will be spent on • Say what they get in return
11	<p>QVC Seller</p> <p>You are giving a presentation on the QVC channel. Pick three children's items to sell.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and describe each item • Say how much it costs and when it will be delivered
12	<p>Court reporter</p> <p>You are reporting for court about a trial. Talk about the following:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the person on trial and say what they are charged with • Describe the crime • Say whether they were found guilty and, if so, what their sentence was

In order to ensure the accessibility of the content in the prompts, the vocabulary used on the cards was targeted towards younger children so that pupils who were weak readers would still be able to read most, if not all, of the words used. I also read out many of the prompts when I explained how the task would work and only simple sentences were used on the prompts. Prior to the HL and LL elicitation tasks beginning, pupils were given a few minutes to sort through their deck of prompt cards so that, in

their group of three, they could make sure that they understood the wording on the cards and, if they didn't, they could check with their friends, with me, or could leave the prompt out and find a new one.

Examples of two young people giving a high and a low load presentation were played as part of the introduction of the HL and LL presentation tasks so that pupils would know what was expected of them. These presentations were designed to be average: not so good that pupils wouldn't be intimidated by the high standard; but good enough to offer a positive example.

A lengthy process of testing the cards was carried out before they were found to be working efficiently. Changes usually involved minor simplifications in response to comments that pupils were not quite sure what the prompt was asking. By the time the prompt cards were complete, I felt confident that they were fit for purpose both as an effective linguistic elicitation task but also as an effective classroom activity. They were simple to understand and they brought a kinaesthetic modality to the sessions – pupils could pick them up and sort through them – which would complement visual and auditory cues and contribute to a rounded lesson plan (McKeown, 2011: 123-124). By giving three or four bullet points for each prompt, pupils had only to think about very small chunks of speech of twenty seconds. The target audience for both the HL and LL were the same: all prompt cards involved addressing a group of adolescents and this was important in controlling audience profile as a potential variable. By introducing some of the topics to the SGD prompts, I was able to increase the level of familiarity with the prompts prior to the HL and LL sessions.

4.3.2.2 Managing the time in the sessions

Because the amount of time available with pupils was so limited, it was imperative to manage the time in the sessions effectively and, to do this, a PowerPoint show was set up with a clock which would count down each one minute presentation, signal a changeover time in which the next presenter of the three would take over, and count down for the next minute. The clock would do this through five cycles of presentations. This countdown clock would display which speaker (A, B or C) was speaking and which round of the presentations was ongoing. Figure 4.4 shows one cycle of this.

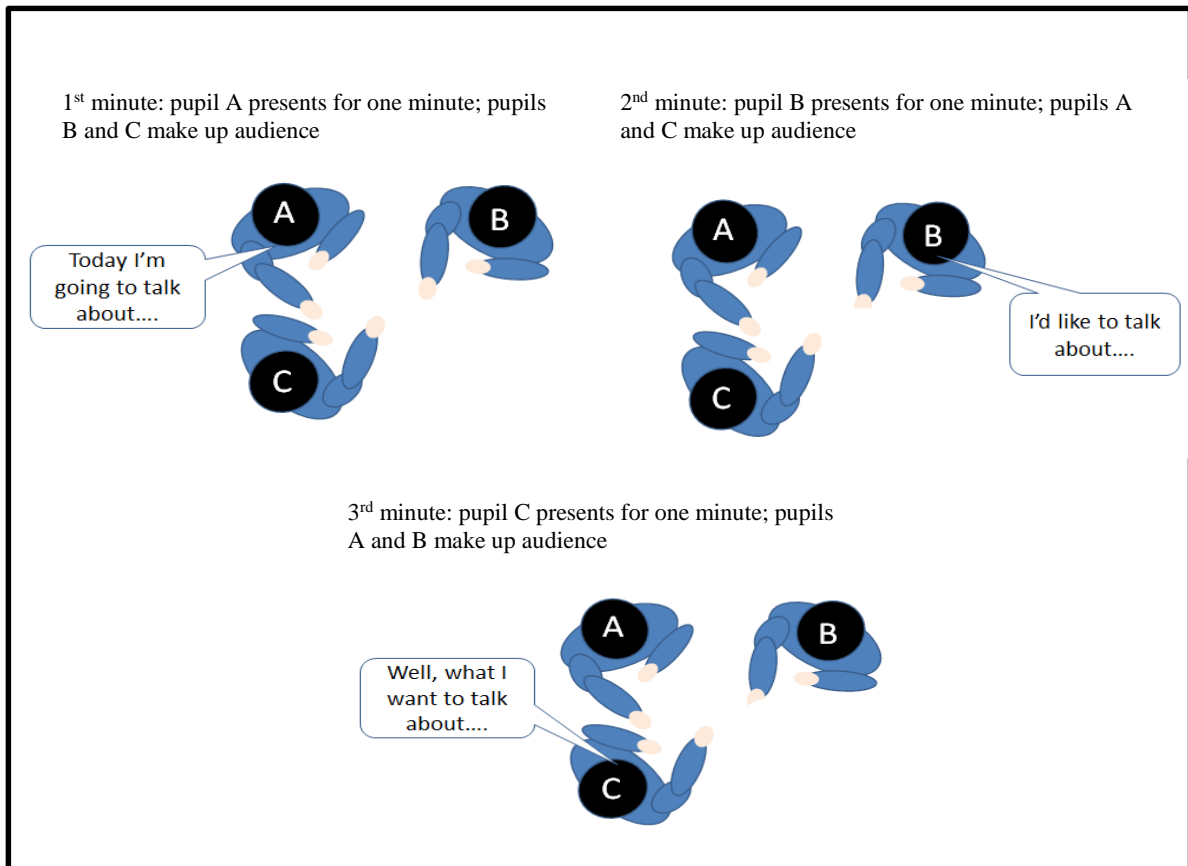


Figure 4.4: Illustration of one round of the presentations

Figure 4.5 shows a screen shot of the PowerPoint countdown clock and changeover slide. The first slide shows that Speaker B has 50 seconds of their second presentation remaining. The second slide would appear when Speaker C completed their fourth

presentation and was due to handover to Speaker A to begin their fifth and final presentation.



Figure 4.5: Screenshots of countdown screen and change over screen

The advantages of this system meant that pupils would be forced to present for precisely one minute, there would be no arguments about speakers trying to talk for longer than a minute (in order to win the word count prize – see 5.1.1), pupils would all contribute the same number of presentations and they would know at any moment how far into the presentations they were.

4.3.2.3 Identity load versus register

When the presentation prompts had been developed, I was concerned about a potential uncontrolled variable – the register that the prompt would trigger. Because the HL presentations are about the individual, they tended to be less weighty topics than the LL presentations. There was a chance that any differences between the two could be due to the speaker adopting a more formal register in response to the weight of the topic rather than the identity load. For example, talking as a new head presenting changes to the school may trigger a more formal register than talking about what they did at the weekend or their favourite film. I wrestled with this issue for some time and considered trying to construct ‘weighty’ HL topics or light-weight LL topics in order to even up this imbalance. But I kept coming back to the same problem: the LLs needed to recreate

a speech environment where the speaker and audience would be likely to expect SE. I wasn't able to resolve this situation so I had to accept the risks associated with it and try to bear them in mind. This issue did have some advantages. If pupils were found to style-shift towards more formal speech during LLs, they would be showing an awareness of the features and an ability to adopt them. Also, it would be interesting to see whether all pupils attached weight to the more formal roles, or played them as light roles and it would be revealing to see what choices pupils made in these environments: would disaffected pupils defiantly refuse to imbue their LLs with any gravitas?

I tried to minimise the potential differences in style by emphasising during the instructions that these were formal classroom presentations and that pupils should speak 'formal standard English'. Whilst this leaves open the possibility that this uncontrolled variable will affect the data, I was at least be aware of the potential and could take it into account during the analysis.

4.4 Conclusions

The discussions in this chapter have shown how complicated the designs of linguistic studies can become. The decisions about which social variables to develop social indices for was relatively straightforward in light of the research referred to in Chapters 2 and 3 but the development of the questionnaires and speech elicitation tasks were more problematic. A lot of the work was very labour-intensive and mentally taxing. It involved a prolonged process of testing, adjusting and retesting which made it feel messy and disjointed at times.

Cheshire and Milroy have shown that simple social indices can be used to quantify social data which can then be used seek correlations with linguistic variables, and this

provided a helpful framework for the development of my own methodology. Scherger and Savage built up their social indices using semantic differential scales, rather than a binary scoring system and this allowed for more nuanced data to be gathered from each participant. The critique of these methods, however, highlighted many potential pitfalls: the risk of presenting statements containing multiple issues, subjective interpretation of the statements, an assumption that the statements are of equal value to the index and the assumption that the participant will respond honestly. Added to this are the complications around the concept of ‘attitude’: do participants have a formed opinion about the attitude, or are they making one up on the spot? What impact might the mood of the participant have on their response? But past researchers have sought to minimise these problems with the development of creative solutions; and these have been embedded into the methodology, for example by presenting the statements from each index over several weeks, presenting the same statements in different weeks and pre-presenting the attitudes being explored. The process of repeatedly testing the statements also ensured they were working as well as could be expected before rollout began.

The approach taken in developing the questionnaires was to leave in as many statements as possible, with the intention of critiquing the data coming out of the process after it was gathered so that any statements which didn’t work could be rejected at that point.

By the end of the development process, the questionnaires were very easy to complete, they required minimal explanation, they gathered a wealth of data very quickly and I felt confident that they would successfully tease apart pupils with differing attitudes to the indices being explored.

In comparison to the questionnaire development, the speech elicitation tasks were easy to plan. The SGD task presented pupils with a good opportunity to be recorded in a relaxed atmosphere with their friends whilst the concept of one-minute presentations using prompt cards presented a great opportunity to elicit lots of free speech. The biggest problems in regard to the presentations were around the wording of the prompts and the structure of the recording sessions. Again, a rigorous process of testing and retesting meant that I could be confident that the wording on the prompts would be effective and the decision to pre-present the cards would ensure that pupils could cherry-pick ones which they were happy with.

One of the biggest pressures in developing the questionnaires and speech elicitation tasks came from the deadline I needed to achieve in order to begin the rollout and gather my data. As discussed in 4.1, quantitative methods tend to involve a heavy load in the planning stage and this was the case here. I was conscious that I would be unable to make changes to the method after the rollout had begun, otherwise the methodological changes would become a variable with the potential to affect the results. The process of testing and retesting led to some overlaps and consequent readjustments in the development stages at times. For example, whilst my list of statements was being critiqued by other linguists, I was holding focus groups with teenagers. Having amended statements and re-tested them coming out of the focus groups, I had to amend them again following feedback from the linguists when it came back to me.

In spite of the issues encountered during this development phase, the outcomes were very positive. Going into the rollout phase, four robust questionnaires had been developed and I was very confident that the elicitation tasks would generate as much HL and LL speech as possible in the short time available. The methodology meant I

was able to capture many potential variables and would be able to single out and explore a wide range of possibly influencing factors which could explain how the pupils who took part in the study were constructing their identities during classroom presentations.

CHAPTER 5: PLANNING AND RUNNING THE SESSIONS

This chapter covers three aspects of the study: planning the sessions, running the study and preparing the data for analysis. The first discussion will focus on the needs of three competing parties involved in the study: me (as the researcher), the pupils and the parents/teachers. In the second part of the chapter, a profile of the schools that took part in the study is given. Technical aspects of the study are discussed to show how the recordings were made, transcribed and processed. In the final part of the chapter, details are given about which features became the focus of the study and the issues involved in capturing them.

5.1 Planning the sessions

The method involved withdrawing pupils from their regular English classrooms to take part in the study and some of the most difficult planning decisions were about how to balance the competing demands of the study requirements, the pupils and the parents and teachers. Figure 5.1 sets out these competing interests and the dark blue area in the middle shows the target area for the sessions. This is where the needs of pupils, parents/teachers and the needs of the research can all be met.

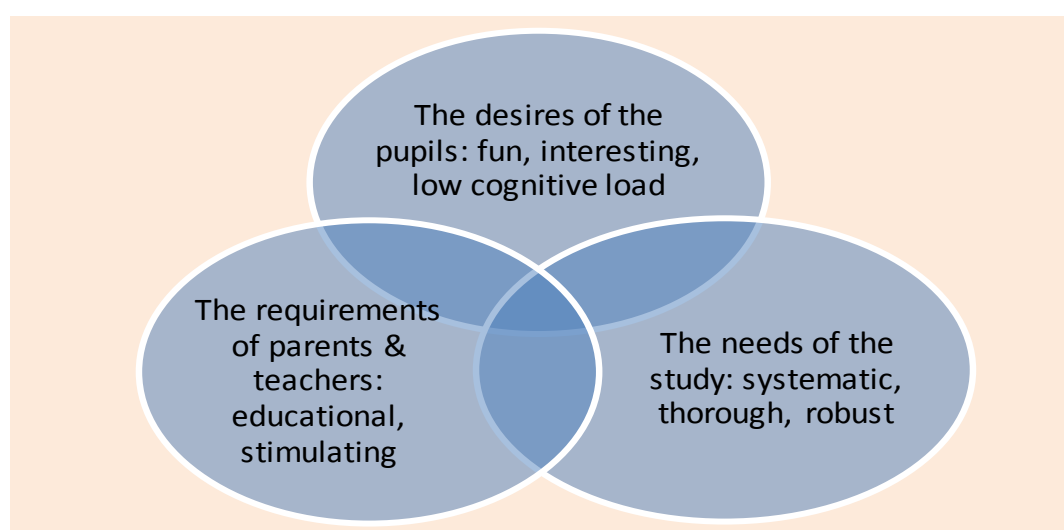


Figure 5.1: Venn diagram showing competing interests

The priority was to gather speech and attitudinal data in a controlled environment which was as close as possible to the authentic classroom situation. But if I focused too much on my own needs, pupils might find it boring and repetitive and parents and teachers might worry about the lack of educational benefits. If I planned the sessions with too much focus on making it enjoyable for pupils, the sessions would be too informal and unstructured, in which case parents and teachers would worry about the lack of educational benefits of the study and it would be difficult to gather adequate 'controlled' data. And if I focused too much on the requirements of parents and teachers, the pupils may find it boring and I may find struggle to find the time to gather data. Throughout the planning process, these considerations were at the front of my mind.

The time available to run the study had to be negotiated with teachers at each of the schools and, after discussing this issue with several teachers, four (one hour) classroom sessions were requested, at a rate of one hour each week. Several teachers suggested that this was the maximum amount of time they would be prepared to allow pupils to miss from their regular English lessons. I asked for six pupils to be withdrawn for each session because I thought this was all that would be manageable given the logistical requirements involved in setting up the recording equipment and processing the data.

In addition to the recording and questionnaire completion, time had to be built into each session for other things: waiting for pupils to arrive; settling them down; introducing each session; issuing instructions; building in the educational and enjoyment activities (see 5.1.1); switching between tasks; and packing away. Taking this into account, I anticipated that each one hour session would allow me around thirty minutes per session to complete the questionnaires and elicit the speech. The first session would be given

over to gathering SGD speech, leaving three sessions with approximately twenty minutes each for HL and LL speech elicitation. Divided by six pupils, this would give me approximately five minutes for each pupil for HL and five minutes for LL speech – if one pupil spoke at a time.

I realised that this would not be enough speech and, after some discussions and experimentation, I made the decision to split the group of six into two groups of three and to run two recordings simultaneously in the sessions. I anticipated that this revised method would yield approximately ten minutes HL and ten minutes LL speech from each pupil. This decision brought some big advantages which turned out to be very significant: it doubled the amount of speech I was able to gather and, more importantly, it allowed me to build a competitive element to the sessions which brought a much more vibrant and dynamic atmosphere to the sessions (discussed further in 5.1.1).

Ten minutes from each pupil was still at the bottom end of what I considered to be acceptable for my purposes. But as the method involved clustering pupils into bigger groups, I anticipated that the combined contribution of pupils in different groups would be sufficient. However, the fact that the revised plans had moved further away from the authentic classroom presentation situation was a concern. By removing pupils from their English lessons, I was already reducing the authenticity of the classroom presentation, but by designing a method in which pupils were presenting to an audience of two friends (with me as an additional audience member overseeing both groups) the artificiality was significantly increased. This will have impacted on the data coming out of the study and will leave an element of uncertainty about whether the findings would have been similar in an authentic classroom setting. However, as discussed earlier, the authentic classroom setting would not have yielded the quantity or quality

of data required to explore the RQs. On the other hand, the sessions maintained many aspects of classroom presentations: pupils were in one of their classrooms during lesson times and they were making formal presentations in front of their friends and a teacher-figure. And all pupils were carrying out the activities under the same controlled conditions, making their data comparable.

5.1.1 Pupil engagement

As discussed above, there was a strong need to make the study engaging for pupils because participation was voluntary and pupils had to complete four sessions over four weeks, meaning they had to find the sessions stimulating enough to keep coming back. My recruitment method also relied on word-of-mouth so, if the study was felt to be a chore, it would be difficult to persuade more pupils to take part.

A five minute activity was planned near the beginning of each session which was designed to be fun and engaging – but also to fulfil the educational remit. All of these activities were based around sociolinguistics, a topic not widely covered in the school curriculum but which was of interest to many pupils and which teachers felt offered a stimulating addition to regular English lessons.

Another important feature of the sessions was the introduction of a competitive element to the speech elicitation tasks. Two prizes were offered in each session. Firstly, the pupil who had said the most words in the previous week's session was allowed to pick from a 'lucky bag' containing a number of small prizes such as finger puppets or a sunflower seed kit. Secondly, a prize was offered for the group of three people who said the most words in the previous session (calculated by carrying out word counts on the transcribed speech). The team with the most words were given a small plate of good

quality biscuits whilst the losing team were given very cheap biscuits. The word-count prizes were included to encourage buy-in from the boys in particular, as studies consistently show that they can respond positively to competitive activities (see, for example, Ofsted, 2003: 4). In order to raise the profile of the word-count prizes, early on in each session (except the opening one) graphs were shown to ‘reveal’ word-count totals and winners from the previous session.

Ethical considerations meant that I was required to ensure anonymity and confidentiality²¹ for all pupils taking part in the study. I was able to use this requirement to carry out a naming exercise which involved each pupil being given a letter of the alphabet and being asked to pick a name they would like to be called for the duration of our sessions. At all sessions after the opening session, pupils were given name tags showing the names they had chosen and pupils were then only addressed by the names they had chosen. As well as ensuring anonymity, this was designed to fulfil several other functions: it would act as an initial ice-breaker, it would facilitate discussions about what they were going to call themselves and it would help to build team spirit and an ‘in-group culture’. Studies show that these small measures can help to cement group-cohesiveness, which can lead to increases in productivity, performance and conformity and can improve morale (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 94-5).

5.1.2 Structure of the sessions

As discussed in 3.1, the study was carried out across four sessions. SGDs were carried out in the first session, HLs in the second session, LLs in the third session and the fourth

²¹ In order to conform to educational policy, pupils cannot be given unconditional assurances of confidentiality, which cannot be guaranteed where issues of personal safety may be at stake.

session was left for catch-ups as required and/or additional elicitation (for example, gathering data from pupils who missed sessions through absence).

The central components of the sessions were obviously speech elicitation tasks and completion of the questionnaires, and these were the activities around which the agendas for the sessions were built. The sessions were broken down into four chunks as is standard practice in many lesson plans (Dodds and Smith, 2011) and this would help to give the sessions the feeling of an authentic lesson. The structure of the sessions was as follows:

1. Introduction: overview of session, word-count competition results (except for the opening session) and stimulating/educational activity
2. Questionnaire completion
3. Elicitation task
4. Debrief discussion, preview next session

5.1.3 Ethics

Before leaving this section, it is important to mention the additional ethical considerations which influenced the planning of the study. The main concern (apart from protecting anonymity) was that pupils would say something embarrassing which might lead to them being ridiculed by other pupils or that pupils would say something inappropriate which would insult or embarrass others, for example, by being personally critical of a teacher. I tried to guard against this by setting out ground rules at the beginning of the sessions which advocated treating our sessions as confidential and being supportive of each other. I also told pupils that criticisms of any individuals during the elicitation tasks would result in pupils being removed from the study.

Because the study involved pupils revealing their attitudes about school – including teachers – I emphasised to them that their responses would be treated in confidence²² and would not be disclosed to the teachers. As part of the university’s ethical requirements, I completed information sheets giving pupils and parents details about the study and their involvement, as well as obtaining signed parental consent for each pupil. A copy of these is attached as Appendix F. I also completed the university’s ethical standards documentation, which was passed by the university’s ethical standards committee.

5.2 The schools

I was keen to recruit pupils from a broad mix of backgrounds so I needed to identify appropriate schools and get permission to carry out my study in them and, after spending several months contacting schools and negotiating terms, four schools were chosen. Table 5.1 summarises these.

Table 5.1: School profiles

School	Number of pupils	Last Ofsted rating	% of pupils on free school meals	% of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C	Number of pupils recruited	Sets recruited from
Shadow High	700	Satisfactory	Above average	33	15	Bottom
Mill Town High	980	Satisfactory	Above average	40	12	Mid
Valley Wide High	430	Satisfactory	Slightly above average	60	22	Mid
Pennine High	1600	Satisfactory	Below average	64	52	Mid and Top

²² In order to conform to school policies, pupils were told that confidentiality would not apply if pupils disclosed anything which led me to believe that they may be at risk of harm.

5.2.1 Shadow High

Shadow High school is in a very small mill town²³ located within half a mile of a prestigious grammar school which sweeps up the most academically gifted pupils in the area. Its 700 pupils are overwhelmingly from working-class families who live in a very tight geographical area.

The study was carried out with fifteen bottom-set Year 8 pupils but some of them were so disruptive that the study was cancelled after a single session. The teacher said that the relatively high degree of freedom they were given in the session was unsuitable for them. In the session I managed to run, some pupils seemed overawed with the recording equipment and contributed very little speech whilst others totally ignored the prompts and simply chatted in small groups. This would not have been too much of a problem but, on listening back through the recordings, some extremely taboo language and inappropriate topics²⁴ were discussed. Below is an extract from one of the girls, Jooky:

my da- [interruption] shuddup my dad . right he he he was he went to the bog for a shit and he was like shouting through the door . we could all hear him going OH FUCK . OH FUCK . I'm having a baby [laughter] an- [interruption] well . I don't know . no we can- [interruption] . anyhow he were going I'm having a baby OH GOD IT'S BLACK [laughter] he did he did this massive shit and he was shout- [interruption]

²³ The term 'mill town' refers to towns which sprang up during the British Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were characterised by having a large number of cotton and woollen mills surrounded by small terraced houses where the workers lived. As a consequence, these towns have very strong working-class roots.

²⁴ For purposes of brevity, the term 'taboo language' will henceforth be used to refer both to taboo language and/or inappropriate topics

This was the most shocking recording I transcribed from the session although other pupils talked about fighting, drinking and vandalism. Worryingly, these pupils excitedly mentioned that I'd told them that the content of the recordings would not be disclosed to teachers and it seemed that this may have motivated some of the shocking comments. As a result, the emphasis on confidentiality in the introduction was toned down at the other schools. Even the naming exercise, which later proved so useful in the other schools, caused issues at Shadow High. After giving pupils letters of the alphabet and asking them to pick a name beginning with that letter, the first three pupils picked the names Abdul, Bin Laden and Cripple (the pupils were exclusively white British).

This was a difficult time in the study and resulted in the loss of what was potentially the most interesting group of pupils – bottom-set working-class pupils. The behaviour of these pupils was in line with Willis's (1977) 'Lads' and Eckert's (2000) 'Burnouts' with many pupils being contemptuous of the authority of the school and oriented to their own in-group. With great reluctance, I was forced to withdraw this school from the study.

5.2.2 Mill Town High

This school is located in a large northern mill town and also draws pupils from a very tight geographical area. The cohort is overwhelmingly white, working-class and is embedded in a particularly tight social network, making it a very interesting environment. It bore every hallmark of an extremely dense and multiplex network: the pupils 'worked' together (ie were students at the same school), lived in the same community, two of them were cousins, two of them were twins and they knew each other's families and histories.

From this school, I took twelve pupils in two groups of six. There was a noticeable difference in behaviour between the boys and girls in these groups: the girls were generally very well behaved and chatty and seemed to enjoy taking part in the study. The boys were oriented much more towards each other rather than the tasks: several of their presentations were marked with ‘verbal duelling’ (see 2.3), they frequently put on strange accents even though I asked them to avoid this, and they often ignored the prompts I gave them. On occasions, their presentations were nothing more than football songs which they sang to each other as taunts. I originally had permission to go back to the school for a second year but, after making contact and getting permission to do this, I was unable to maintain the contact in order to finalise plans and was unable to repeat the study.

5.2.3 Valley Wide High

This is a Catholic school located in a small mill town in semi-rural area. It draws pupils from a wide geographical area also served by several non-religious secondary schools. In addition, there is a prestigious grammar school in the catchment area which takes many of the most academically gifted pupils from the area. The cohort is overwhelmingly made up of white, working-class pupils.

I took nine Year 8 pupils (aged twelve and thirteen) from this school in March 2011 and repeated the study with them again a year later when they were in Year 9, giving me two distinct sets of data from these pupils. At that time, I also took out another six Year 9 pupils, though I lost complete sets of recordings from two of them in a computer crash. This left usable recordings from four of them. From this, I had twenty-two

complete sets of data from thirteen pupils. All of these pupils were from mid-sets, they behaved reasonably well in the study and contributed usable data.

5.2.4 Pennine High

Pennine High is a set in a semi-rural community which is very vibrant and artistic. The school has approximately 1,600 pupils and has its own sixth form college. It has a very broad and balanced mix of pupils with many pupils from low income families as well as a solid cohort of middle-class pupils. The school is positioned along a scenic valley in the Pennine Hills with neighbouring secondary schools on either side.

This school offered an ideal opportunity to gather data from pupils from middle-class homes, an opportunity which wasn't afforded at the other schools. It was important to achieve this in order to give a point of reference for the pupils from working-class schools. Of the seventy-six pupils who took part on my study, fifty-two of them attended this school, drawn from three classes. Twenty-seven pupils came from a top-set Year 8 group, many of whom had traits typical of the middle-classes (discussed in Chapter 6). Seven pupils came from a mid-set Year 8 class and eighteen pupils from a mid-set Year 9 class and these came from a mix of middle- and working-class backgrounds (discussed in Chapter 6).

The different cultures of the three classes within this school were very striking (this will be discussed further in Chapter 6). I planned to take more from the Year 9 class but found that they were difficult to manage, some of them didn't generate much speech and there was a lack of volunteers. When pupils from these classes did take part, it was more because they wanted to avoid their regular English classes than for any advantages inherent in the study. The mid-set Year 8 group at the school were also difficult to keep

on track during the recordings. A couple of times they unplugged each other's microphones, rendering the recordings unintelligible. In contrast, the top-set Year 8 class were all extremely enthusiastic about taking part in the study, they understood the tasks quickly and generated a lot of speech. They almost all showed an interest in the study and were keen to learn more about it.

5.2.5 My status in the schools

My status was different in the three schools and this presented an additional uncontrolled variable. For a time I was embedded in Pennine High and took on the role of a teaching assistant. I was known to many of the pupils who took part in the study and was seen as an adult authority figure in the school – though not as a teacher. In Valley Wide High, I had previously done some one-to-one booster teaching, although I didn't come into contact with any of the pupils who took part in my study through this work. However, I come from the same community as the school cohort and had several experiences where the pupils in my study asked me if I knew people that they knew (usually their parents, aunties or uncles who I might have gone to school with). I didn't know any of the pupils in Mill Town High prior to running my study and we didn't share any knowledge of third persons. However, we did develop some banter because I come from a (rival) neighbouring area. My status in Shadow High was similar to Mill Town High although, as discussed above, I didn't have the opportunity to develop my relationship with the pupils there.

Although these differences in status had the potential to act as an uncontrolled variable, I made a conscious effort to maintain a consistent teaching style whilst accepting the potential issues my differing statuses could throw up. I approached the sessions in the manner of an English teacher, rather than an academic researcher (albeit a teacher on

the liberal end of the spectrum). The sessions I planned were not dissimilar to typical English lessons and the pupils were in their schools and in lesson time. All of these factors contributed to the impression of an average school lesson.

However, there was one uncontrolled variable which did have the potential to affect the results and that is my strong Lancashire accent and dialect. Whilst I ensured that my speech was formal at all times, I was unable to drop my accent and dialect features. The only alternative seemed to be to ask someone else to run the sessions on my behalf, which I didn't have the resources to do. Accommodation theory predicts that speakers sometimes try to close down the social distance between themselves and their interlocutor by accommodating to their speech style (Giles, 2001) and there was an obvious risk that my own Lancashire speech features might provoke pupils to accentuate their own accents. On the other hand, the studies discussed in 2.4.2 suggest that friendship groups are far more likely to influence pupils than the speech features of their teacher. For this reason, I don't expect that my speech features will have had a significant impact on nonstandard speaking pupils – but there are risks that they might have impacted on standard speaking pupils. For example, a pupil who thinks 'speaking the right way is important' may face a dilemma in responding to the question about this in my questionnaire: should they be honest and be critical of nonstandard speech or should they be polite and say they think it unimportant? There was also a small risk that my features may have dissuaded aspirational pupils from adopting more high-prestige features who, had I had more high-prestige features in my own speech, might have accommodated towards me. But I could only acknowledge these risks and, if they seemed to affect any aspect of the study, raise them as issues during my analysis.

5.3 Technical and people issues

All pupils wore headset microphones fitted with mufflers when being recorded (as shown in Figure 5.2). The main benefit to this type of microphone was that it ensured that only the speaker was audible. During pre-testing I tried recording using lapel microphones but these drew too much



Figure 5.2: headset microphone

noise from around the vicinity of the recording. Although some pupils were a little self-conscious about these at the beginning of the SGD recording tasks, they soon got used to them. As well as ensuring a high quality sound, these also proved to be a popular gimmick for some pupils who derived a sense of importance from wearing them.

When carrying out the HL and LL recordings, I used laptops with Audacity software downloaded onto them, recorded at 16 bit, 44kHz and saved as wav files. This is a free software package which allows professional-level sound recording straight onto a laptop, removing the need to download from a voice recorder after the event. It also has a visual display showing the voice waves as they are being recorded so that during sessions I was able to keep an eye on the waves to make sure that sound was being recorded and could even see the quality of the sound by the thickness of the waves. Figure 5.3 shows a screenshot of Audacity playing back a recording.

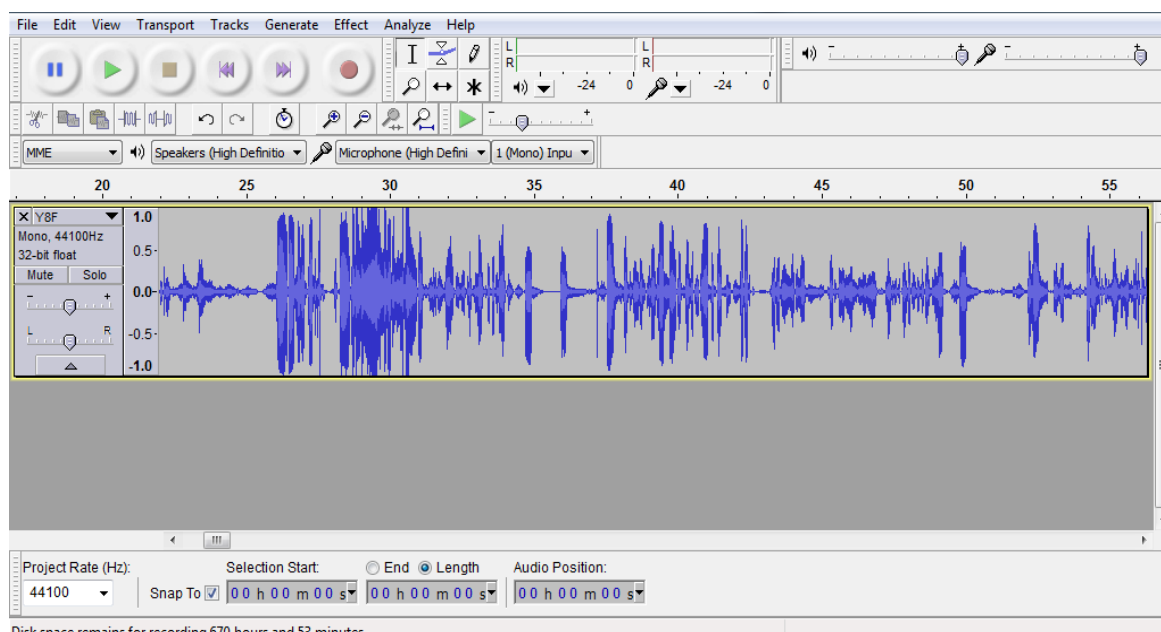


Figure 5.3: Screenshot of Audacity sound recording software

Recordings were transcribed using ELAN, a free software package developed specifically for linguistics which allows speech to be transcribed alongside the time line. Figure 5.4 shows a screenshot of the ELAN screen.

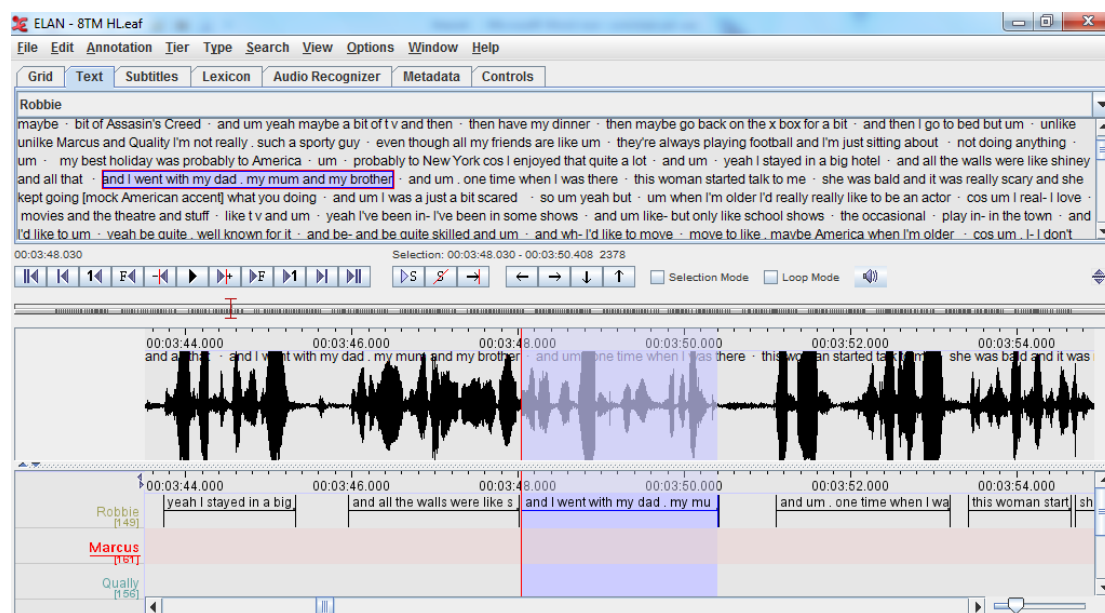


Figure 5.4: Screenshot of ELAN transcription software

This shows a section of pre-transcribed text. The shaded vertical block in the middle of the sound waves shows the specific speech being transcribed into text *and I went with my dad . mu mu*. This was spoken by ‘Robbie’, whose name appears to the left of the text. At the top of the screen, all the text typed in Robbie’s tier is shown. One of the most advantageous features of this software is that you can click on any part of the text at the top of the screen and it will find the location in the recording and play the sound. The advanced search facility also allows the researcher to search through numerous files for specific words. By clicking on the word, the sound is played. This software proved to be an invaluable tool in keeping an efficient control over all transcribed text.

In addition to this ELAN corpus, I also set up a single Microsoft Word file with the entire corpus in it. This offered several advantages, some of which can be seen in Figure 5.5. By putting headings and subheadings in, I was able to quickly find my way around the document. The ‘navigation’ pane shown on the left hand side of Figure 5.5 shows that the current presentation is that of Freya S. The details after her name refer to her school, Valley Wide High, her year group, and when the recordings took place. These details can be used to allocate her to the relevant categories for quantitative analysis. Using Word also allowed me to reduce the code-markings to superscript, which made them less intrusive on the eye and meant that the flow of the text was easier to read. For example, this made the difference between ‘th⁰ink’ and ‘th⁰ⁱnk’. The search facility in Word was also better than that in ELAN because it allowed me to jump through each hit in the corpus and see the entry instantly in context.

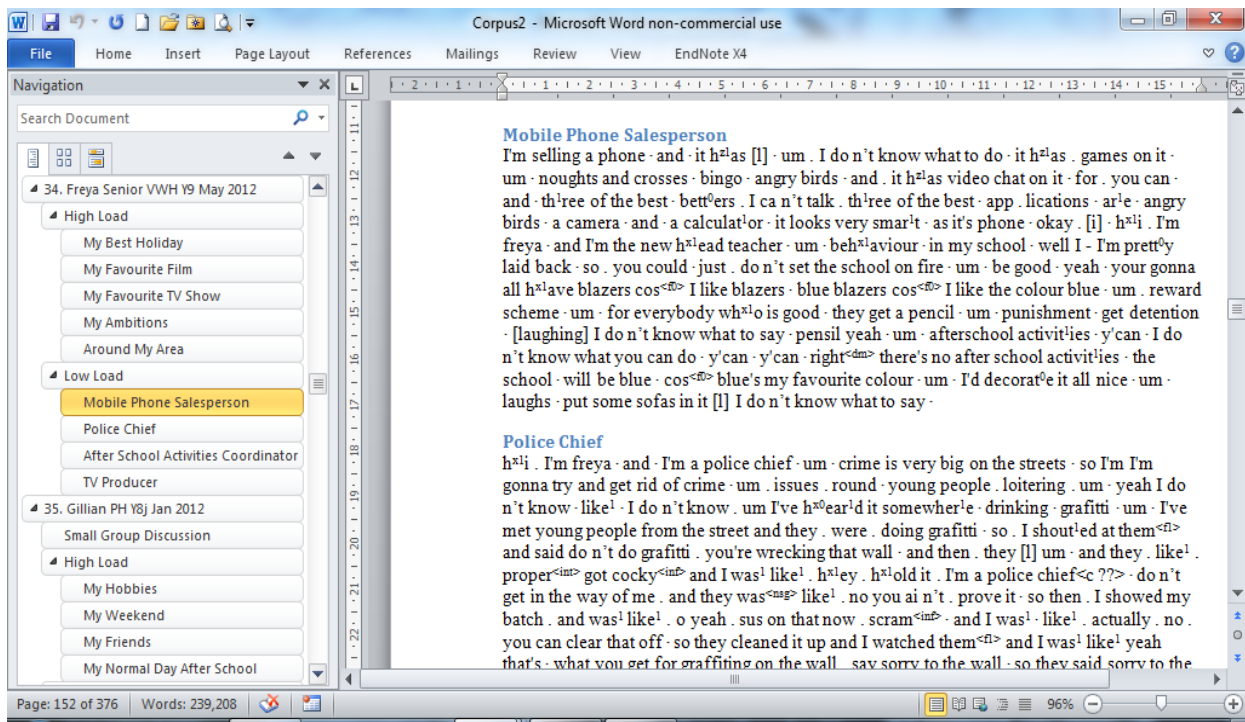


Figure 5.5: Screenshot of Word software with headings and subheadings

5.4 Critique of the sessions

Almost all pupils said they had enjoyed taking part in the study and most of the features built into the design were successful. The naming exercise generated some excitement and a sense of ‘in-group’ solidarity. The competitive element of the study worked really well and undoubtedly increased the amount of speech elicited. For example, there were times when pupils helped their team mate by suggesting further speech topics when they had ‘dried up’. The ‘reveal’ in the word count competition was eagerly awaited and greeted with groans and cheers. The cheap biscuits given to the group who generated the least number of words were a light-hearted source of shame and the expensive biscuits, presented to the ‘winning’ group, were a source of great pride. Pupils generally found the educational activities interesting and stimulating. I felt that the mood of the sessions, whilst enjoyable, maintained the feel of a classroom session, albeit one that was different to their normal classroom experiences.

The one-minute presentations worked well and, for the most part, elicited fluent speech for the whole of the minute. The PowerPoint timer was extremely effective in managing the time during the HLs and LLs: it brought an element of vibrancy because pupils were constantly aware of the time; it meant that pupils were ready and eager to take over from the next presenter; all pupils knew exactly where about in the cycle they were at any moment; and it kept the presenters fresh because they had two minutes' rest between presentations. It also ensured that I had exactly the same amount of speech from each participant – most of the time. There were several times when one of the three members of a sub-team was absent and, on these occasions, two speakers rotated through the three-person cycles and generated more speech than was required. When the absent person returned, they were asked to deliver every other presentation. When one person was absent, the two-person teams worked much harder than the three-person teams but, thankfully, they never complained about this and often enjoyed the additional challenge.

The questionnaire completion appeared to go without a hitch: pupils were able to work out how to complete them with minimum instruction and completion was efficient and trouble-free. There were minor issues with pupils discussing and comparing their responses in the first session but for the subsequent sessions the six questionnaires were set up in different locations around the room and pupils were allocated a space to quietly fill them in.

In spite of the success of the sessions, there were some problems. When the sessions were planned I anticipated pupils coming straight to me but teachers insisted that pupils had to turn up to their classroom first so that they could be marked as present in the register. At times, this had a considerable impact on the time available for the study

because teachers held the pupils back until the register had been taken, which could be up to ten minutes into the lesson. Pupils then arrived for the sessions in small groups up to fifteen minutes into the session. This meant that, on occasions, I cancelled the peripheral aspects of the study in order to complete the speech elicitation and questionnaire completion tasks.

The speech elicitation task was the centre-piece of the sessions and pupils generally looked forward to it, but it was high intensity which made it difficult for pupils to sustain their energy levels through it and there were times when I sensed restlessness in the pupils towards the end of the fifteen minutes. The last presentation was often completed with a sense of relief.

The sessions were carried out between October 2011 and March 2013. Approximately 225,000 words were transcribed, around a dozen linguistic variables were identified and 35,000 tokens were coded during the transcription process. Social indices for all pupils were developed out of the statements presented in the questionnaires.

5.5 Coding the features

As stated in 4.1, an important part of my methodology involved taking an emergent approach to the identification of speech features prior to transcribing the recordings. In reality, I had some preconceptions about which features might emerge (and most of these duly did emerge) and I acknowledge that both my personal background and my sociolinguistic experience will have impacted on which features I expected to find – and which ones I ultimately did find. That said, the resulting list of features includes some variables which I didn't anticipate, and there were also variables which I expected to find but which proved to be relatively insignificant.

The marking of variables had two functions: to facilitate the quantification of the variables and to enable them to be found quickly and easily for qualitative analysis and Table 5.2 shows all variables marked in the corpus. When marking the features in the corpus, I focused on identifying and marking the variables with the potential to inform discussions about identity construction.

Table 5.2: Coding used in corpus

<i>italic text</i>	speech with an adopted accent (eg. speaker minicking scouse accent)	like2	quotative <i>like</i>
hx	/h/ open class	<dm>	other discourse markers
hz	/h/ closed class	<nsg>	nonstandard grammar (not including was0 or DAR)
hx1	/h/ realised	<t>	taboo or inappropriate language
hx0	/h/ dropped	<mna>	monosyllabic negated auxiliary: <i>dint</i> , <i>shunt</i> for <i>didn't</i> , <i>shouldn't</i>
t1	/t/ realised	<int>	intensifiers: <i>proper</i> and <i>well</i>
t0	/t/ reduced to glottal stop	<v>	vacillation
d0	voiced /t/		banter
th1	/th/ realised	<h>	humour
th0	/th/ fronted	<c ...>	crossing
was1	standard use of <i>was</i>	<e>	error
were<was0>	<i>were</i> -for- <i>was</i>	<imp>	impolite
<dar>	definite article reduction	<iar>	indefinite article reduction
like1	<i>like</i> as discourse marker		

variables with formal and informal variants		Non-standard spellings	
because<fl>	cos<f0>	shut up	shudd0up
thank you<fl>	thanks/ta<f0>	getting	gedd0ing
twenty<fl>	twenny<f0>	got to	godda
something<fl>	summat<f0>	do n't know	dunno
child(ren)<fl>	kids(s)<f0>	putting	pudd0ing
friend(s)<fl>	mate(s)<f0>	better	bedd0er
pound(s)<fl>	quid<f0>	pretty	predd0y
going to<fl>	gonna<f0>		
want to<fl>	wanna<f0>		

As I began the extremely labour-intensive transcribing process, I realised that decisions needed to be made about whether or not to mark word environments. Research consistently shows that word environments can be significant variables so if I didn't mark them, they had the potential to become uncontrolled variables which might skew the data. However, marking all word environments would be a lengthy and labour

intensive process, the corpus was large and there were already many linguistic variables being marked and several social variables under investigation. Furthermore, I knew that some of the marked variables would not be included in the final analysis (due to word count constraints). For that reason, I did not focus on word environments when coding the corpus. For many features, such as the grammatical features, Definite Article Reduction (DAR) and *like*-DM, I did not consider the word-environments at all – but I always had the ability to go back to the corpus and investigate them if required. For some phonetic features, such as /h/ and /t/, I did take word environments into account by restricting the word-environment conditions which triggered coding (see 5.5.1).

In this section I will describe the emergence of the speech features which proved to be important in the analysis and say how I went about capturing them and marking them in the corpus.

5.5.1 Salient accent features

The most striking and abundant features to emerge during transcription were the three low-prestige accent features: /h/-dropping, /t/-glottalling and /θ/-fronting.

The realisation or dropping of /h/ in stressed, onset syllables was an obvious salient variable which was always likely to be important in the construction and presentation of identity for pupils in these schools. It has been described as 'the single most powerful pronunciation shibboleth in England' (Wells, 1982: 254) and Mugglestone (2003: 95) says:

The use of /h/ in modern English has come to stand as one of the foremost signals of social identity, its presence in initial positions associated almost inevitably with the 'educated' and 'polite' while its loss commonly triggers popular connotations of the 'vulgar', the 'ignorant', and the 'lower class'

(It is worth pointing out that these sentiments are, perhaps, middle-class-centric and will not be shared in the working-class communities. In fact, within these communities the consistent realisation of /h/ might be enough to trigger accusations of pretentiousness.) However, there are signs that the status of /h/ is changing in some areas. Kerswill and Williams (2000b: 78) found that /h/-realisation in working-class communities in the south of England had increased among young speakers although speakers in Hull, a northern English city, maintained a pattern of /h/-dropping, possibly because /h/-realisation might have connotations as 'southern' or 'posh' (Kerswill and Williams, 2000b: 79).

During transcription, it became apparent that there were word-environment distinctions in /h/-dropping between open and closed class words: a high number of closed-class words were dropped by all speakers. I was concerned that if I marked and included all tokens of /h/ without discriminating between open- and closed-class tokens, the results would be diluted by the closed-class tokens. To keep my options open (so that the two word classes could be distinguished) lexical tokens were coded as *x* and pronouns and auxiliary verbs were coded as *z*²⁵. This resulted in the following combinations:

- h^{x1}ound, h^{x1}ardly (open class, /h/ realised)

²⁵ I chose these letters because they occur far less frequently than most other letters and they were unlikely to occur after *h*.

- h^{x0}alf, h^{x0}ate (open class, /h/ dropped)
- h^{z1}as, h^{z1}er (closed class, /h/ realised)
- h^{z0}ave, h^{z0}im (closed class, /h/ dropped)

This allowed the variables to be found and counted in the corpus by searching for hx1, hx0, hz1 and hz0.

While most of the markings of /h/ were relatively straightforward, there were a few problems, for example in distinguishing between lexical and auxiliary *have*; although after doing manual searches to see the scale of the problem, there were very few instances of lexical-*have*. There were over two thousand tokens of *have*, *had* and *has* in the corpus and I felt that the work that would have to be put into searching through all tokens was too much given the small number of lexical tokens identified through my sample. As a consequence, tokens of lexical-*have* are incorrectly coded as closed class in the corpus.

There was also a problem with a small set of words beginning with /h/ which are not generally aspirated²⁶, such as *hour*, *honour* and *honest*. Because these words are not typically aspirated, they were not marked with *x* or *z* so that they would not be captured and included in counts. Word medial /h/ caused some problems because there are times when it might be realised by English speakers, such as *alcohol* and *behaviour*, and others when it would not, such as *vehicle* and *Birmingham*. Here, the presence or

²⁶ The reasons for this are historic. After the Norman Conquest these words were loaned into English from Old French where they were unaspirated but retained the letter *h* from their Latin derivation (Mugglestone, 2003: 97)

absence of /h/ was only coded in words where it is typically realised in high-prestige accents. Over seven thousand tokens of /h/ were coded.

The realisation of /t/ was considered another significant variable because, as with /h/, the literature suggests that it might be used differently by speakers from different social backgrounds. In the communities covered in this study, /t/ can be realised as a voiced or unvoiced alveolar plosive (/d/ or /t/) or it can be realised as a glottal stop. The glottal stop has been described as a social shibboleth (Mugglestone, 2003: 285) but recent research shows that its use has been spreading throughout England across all social groups so that it is not seen as the marker of low-status speech that it once was (Kerswill and Williams, 2000a: 103).

According to Straw and Patrick (2007: 390) descriptions of /t/-glottalling has been typically divided into three word-environments:

- Pre-consonantal: *I bit my lip, no buts*
- Pre-vocalic: *but I quit, better*
- Pre-pausal: *you bet. Guess what?*

However, this distinction misses other aspects of the variant which may condition its use, in particular, word-position: word-initial, word-medial and word-final.

During pilot testing I sometimes found it difficult to distinguish between /t/-glottalling and the connected speech phenomenon of consonant cluster lenition (Carr, 1996: 118), whereby one or more consonants are elided when several consonants occur together (for example, the /p/ in the phrase *crisp bowl*). Where /t/ is involved in a consonant

cluster during fluent speech, such as in the phrase *mint fresh*, I found it difficult to be certain about whether it has been elided or glottalised. This issue is compounded because /t/ is at the bottom of the sonority scale (Carr, 1996: 72) making it a prime candidate for elision. Had I had been marking fewer features, I would have persevered with this but with several thousand tokens, and given the tight time constraints I had available to transcribe the speech, I decided only to mark pre-vocalic and pre-pausal /t/s but not pre-consonantal /t/s. Pre-vocalic /t/ was also easier to categorise (as [t] or [ʔ]) than pre-consonantal-/t/ because, as predicated by the principle of maximum onset (Carr, 1993: 73), it can fill an empty onset slot before the vowel, making it more salient. Leaving out pre-consonantal /t/ also reduced word-environment factors as uncontrolled variables, though some uncontrolled word-environment variables remained (e.g. word commonality, pre-/t/ environments and number of syllables in the words). Opportunities for /t/-glottaling following a consonant were found to be limited to a small sub-set of tokens made up of post-n (eg *want*) and post-l (eg *felt*)²⁷ so only these conditions were coded in the corpus (this left words such as *left*, *last*, *fact* and *except* un-coded).

In the corpus, the voiceless alveolar was coded as ‘t1’, the voiced alveolar was coded as ‘d0’ and /t/-glottaling was coded as ‘t0’. In addition to this, I inserted an x before the l when the /t/ followed a consonant, which would allow me to isolate post-consonantal /t/, should the need arise. I was able to distinguish between word-medial and word-final tokens by using the wildcard feature, ‘?’, to search for /t/ where it was followed by another letter. That meant that searches could be carried out as follows:

- ‘t1?’ or ‘t0?’ for inter-vocalic /t/ (e.g. *twitt¹er* or *putt⁰ing*)

²⁷ Post-r tokens were not marked because there were very few instances of rhoticity observed during transcription, meaning that the r would not be realised.

- ‘tx1?’ or ‘tx0?’ for post-consonant, pre-vocalic /t/ (e.g. *paint^{x1}ing* or *penalt^{x0}y*)
- ‘t1_’ or ‘t0_’ for post-vocalic, word-final /t/ (e.g. *eat¹ it* or *but⁰ everyone*)
- ‘tx1_’ or ‘tx0_’ for post-consonant, word-final /t/ (e.g. *want^{x1} it* or *felt^{x0} a*)
- ‘d0’ for voiced alveolar (e.g. *bedd⁰er* for *better*)

The only complication this raised was with words such as *quite* and *late*, where the letter t is not word-final but the sound /t/ is. These tokens were individually identified and moved from the word-medial to the word-final category for quantification purposes. By the end of the transcribing exercise over three thousand tokens of pre-vocalic /t/ had been coded and I had the ability to isolate the most important word-environment variables during analysis, if required.

The third accent feature that emerged out of the recordings was /θ/. The low-prestige fronted variant of this feature realised as [f] or [v], is currently spreading across Britain although its spread is slower than /t/-glottalling (Kerswill and Williams, 2000b: 78). Studies show that this feature is heavily used by working class adolescent males (Clark and Trousdale, 2009: 3). One of the problems in marking /θ/ as realised or fronted in my corpus was that not all /θ/ words are subjected to this variation. Word-initially, only the voiceless fricative is fronted (e.g. *thing, thank, throw*), in which case it is realised as /f/. The voiced fricative (eg *thy, though, this*) isn’t generally fronted when it occurs word-initially although one speaker in particular had an unusual habit of occasionally realising it as /v/ in words like *than* and *the*. I did not mark these instances as fronting because I took the view that they were not being used stylistically as part of a speech pattern related to identity presentation.

As most closed-class /θ/ words are voiced and are not subject to fronting, these were not marked in the corpus (words such as *the, they, this, there, than*). In the corpus, tokens of /θ/ were coded as ‘th1’ when they were realised and ‘th0’ when they were fronted. Three and a half thousands tokens of /θ/ were coded.

5.5.2 Non Standard Grammar (NSG)

Given that the NC promotes spoken SE above NSDs, the identification of NSG features was always going to be an important part of this research – but it proved to be problematic. My early intention was to mark all salient nonstandard features (eg double negatives) with their own code but they simply didn’t occur frequently enough. Instead, I coded anything in the corpus that might be defined as nonstandard with a single code – <nsg> – with the intention of breaking the list down during pre-analysis but this threw up several complexities regarding what should and shouldn’t be included as NSG. Two specific features, DAR and *were-for-was*²⁸, were coded separately from NSG because they are particularly salient regional features (see 5.2.3), they occurred with relatively high frequency and they could be quantified as ‘raw frequencies’ (RF) rather than ‘normalised frequencies’ (NF) (see Appendix G for more information).

Four categories were not coded as NSG because other codes were more appropriate.

These were:

- Where features could reasonably be defined as NSG or instances of informal language, a preference was given to defining the feature as informal language

²⁸ The term *were-for-was* is used to avoid the ambiguity embedded in alternative terms, such as ‘nonstandard *was*’ or ‘nonstandard *were*’. For example, the term ‘nonstandard *was*’ could refer to the verb *was* when it is used in a nonstandard manner (‘we was’), or it could refer to the nonstandard variant of the verb *was*, which could be *were* (‘she were’).

because I felt that this had the greatest interpretative value. These were coded as <inf>. For example, *goes*, when used as a quotative (e.g. *and the doctor goes<inf> do you w - do you have any questions for me*) could reasonably be described as nonstandard or informal, and was marked as informal.

- Grammatical errors which have no history of being used stylistically. These were not counted as NSG but were coded as <e>. For example, Sedrick made the following utterance: *my favourite th0ings on telly . is . got<e> to be family guy*. It seems clear from the context that Sedrick meant to say *has got to be*, rather than *is got to be* and, as this seems to be a slip-of-the-tongue, it was coded as an error.
- Features considered nonstandard in written English but widely used in spoken English. Specifically, existential *there* with contracted present tense singular copula (*is*) and a plural subject (eg *there's lots of them*), which has been found to be the preferred option in speech (Cheshire, 1999: 135-136); and *less-for-fewer* which, although claimed to be nonstandard by the Plain English Campaign (BBC, 2008), has been used in very formal situations, for example, by the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown (*less jobs*)²⁹ and BBC political commentator, Jonathan Dimbleby (*less people*)³⁰. These were marked as <ss> ('standard *speech*', as distinct from nonstandard *writing*).
- Instances of crossing (see 3.3) were not counted as NSG, even though they may have involved nonstandard features, and were coded as <c>. Where the accent could be identified, this was also recorded. For example, in the utterance <c>gansta> *bare . that's bare* I noted that Chris seemed to have 'crossed' into a 'gangsta' identity. His use of the adjective *bare* could have been marked as

²⁹ at his monthly press conference, 18th February 2009

³⁰ on the political debating programme, *Any Questions*, Radio 4, 5th December, 2008

nonstandard but was marked as crossed speech to show that he was not investing his own identity in the utterance.

This left instances which would be marked as NSG. The ^{<nsg>} marker had around three hundred entries and involved many different features. Table 5.3 gives a breakdown of all the nonstandard features which occurred five times or more, ranked in order of frequency.

Table 5.3: Breakdown of instances of NSG (features with 5 or more tokens)

Number of tokens	Variable	Example
53	preposition ellipsis	<i>look out Ø the window</i>
41	[plural] <i>was</i>	<i>we was; there was litte gaps in the chairs</i>
28	auxiliary ellipsis	<i>they Ø got a new head teacher</i>
20	[plural] <i>is</i>	<i>my hobbies is; the people is</i>
15	demonstrative <i>them</i>	<i>them jumpers; them lives</i>
14	nonstandard tense	<i>it looked like it come from</i>
13	adjective form for adverb	<i>they download really quick</i>
12	<i>reet</i>	<i>it's reet</i>
11	relative <i>what</i>	<i>anything what happens</i>
10	double comparative	<i>more creamier</i>
7	<i>(n)owt</i>	<i>there's nowt else to do</i>
7	nonstandard past participle	<i>she could have rode; I've forgot your name</i>
6	singular <i>us</i>	<i>pass us that one</i>
5	irregular 3rd person present tense singular -s marking	<i>I starts laughing; so does my parents</i>
5	double negative	<i>I don't want no messing</i>
5	plural <i>you</i>	<i>they'll send yous the money</i>

Each of these different features will have its own distinct connotation and level of salience among speakers and listeners. It is interesting that despite the relatively small number of NSG tokens many of the pupils from the working-class schools will be (correctly) identified as speakers of the Lancashire dialect. Either such judgments are based on an extremely small number of nonstandard tokens or it is accent features,

rather than grammatical features, which are triggering the interpretation of a Lancashire dialect speaker.

5.5.3 DAR and *were-for-was*

As discussed above, DAR and *were-for-was* were given their own codes in the corpus because I anticipated them occurring in high volumes and because they have been described as two of the most salient grammatical markers of local northern working-class identity (Moore, 2003, Whisker, 2012).

Definite Article Reduction (DAR) is the phenomenon whereby the definite article is reduced to a vowel-less form or is elided altogether (Hollman and Siewierska, 2011: 32). It typically involves a reduction from [θə] or [θɪ:] to [t], [θ], [ʔ] or [∅] (Hollman and Siewierska, 2011: 35). Its use in the north of England, and particularly in Lancashire and Yorkshire, has been referred to as a stereotyped feature (Jones, 2002: 325) and it has been used by writers to mark local speech in these areas for well over a hundred years (Hollman and Siewierska, 2011: 33). Whisker (2012: 73) singled this feature out as being ‘the variable with the greatest awareness for local speakers in Huddersfield’, a northern mill town in close proximity to (and with a similar profile to) the locations used in this study. In Whisker’s study, this was the only feature consistently singled out by local speakers as being indicative of local speech. Petyt (1985, cited in Whisker, 2012: 49) found that the feature was marked by three factors: a decrease in the nonstandard form as the social class of the speaker increases, being used more by men than women and a decrease in the use of the feature over time. There was also evidence that the feature was stigmatised with parents encouraging their children to avoid it (Whisker, 2012: 73). Although DAR can be realised as [t], [θ], [ʔ] or [∅] all reductions were coded as <dar> in the corpus without distinguishing between

these realisations. I did this is because I intended to concentrate my analysis on social conditions rather than word environments but I would retain the ability to carry out analysis on the word environments if required.

Were-for-was refers to the use of the plural past tense form of the verb *to be* with singular subjects (eg *I were riding my bike*). Like DAR, the feature is associated with northern English dialects, particular those of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and shares three traits with DAR and /h/-dropping: a decrease in the nonstandard form as the social class of the speaker increases, being used more by men than women and a decrease in the use of the feature over time (discussed above). Moore (2003) noted the feature was used in her Bolton study, another northern mill town with a similar profile to the locations used in this study. *Were-for-was* has consistently shown up as a feature of Lancashire and Yorkshire dialects since the mid-nineteen century although there is evidence that it is coming under pressure from the advancement of *was* for singular and plural past tense forms (Moore, 2011: 348). As with DAR, there are word-environment variations in usage (Whisker, 2012: 37) but these were not taken into account at the coding stage. *Was* was coded as *was¹* when it was realised with SE agreement (*I/it/she/he was...*) and *were^{<was0>}* when it was realised with the nonstandard local agreement (*I/it/she/he were*). This meant that I could count standard and nonstandard variants by searching for ‘was1’ or ‘was0’.

5.5.4 *Like-DM*

The specific discourse marker, *like*³¹ – although not strictly nonstandard – was found to occur with very high frequency so was coded as a variable in its own right. This feature

³¹ Quotative-*like* was coded separately and is not included in the figures for *like-DM*

has been linked to adolescent speech (Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, 2006) although it has also been found to connote with uncertainty and can give the impression that the speaker ‘cannot seem to articulate his/her ideas clearly and precisely’ (Cohen, 2004: 17). It can be a difficult feature to interpret because discourse markers such as *like* ‘may appear in such a multiplicity of functional contexts, and with such a varied array of meanings, that it is very difficult to assign a core meaning’ (Trillo, 2009: 193): it has been linked with a variety of functions, such as focus marking, hedging, exemplification, pause filling, hesitation and word-finding difficulties (Levey, 2006). Instances of *like*-DM were coded with as ‘like¹’ so they could be identified in the corpus and were quantified using NF methods (see Appendix G).

5.5.5 Nonstandard intensifiers

I was interested in the use of two specific intensifiers by pupils because they occurred frequently in some pupils’ speech but not in others’, and these were *well* and *proper*. Both of the terms have public profiles in which they connote edgy, urban identities and appeared to be being used as part of a package of features used to construct disaffected, working-class identities by some pupils. *Well*, when used to premodify an adjective (*well good*) was one of the features most frequently used by the mock-gansta rapper, Ali G, a fictional television character who was a member of a suburban London adolescent street gang. And *proper* (*proper good*) (which is possibly more localised around the northern conurbations of Manchester and Leeds) has similar connotations of disaffection. For example, one of the most controversial British X-factor contestants was Chloe Mafia, a ‘wild-child’ from Wakefield, in the northern English conurbation of Leeds who had a large number of anti-social and drug related convictions and who became associated with the phrase *proper mad, innit* (3am, 2010). During discussions

with pupils, it was clear that these two intensifiers had connotations of working-class 'street' slang.

In regard to the marking of these variables, I could have counted these and shown them using NF quantification methods but their use could also be compared to the use of more standard and much more common intensifiers, such as *really* and *very*, using RF methods. To keep both options open I marked *really* and *very* (when used as intensifiers) as <int1> and *well* and *proper* (when used as intensifiers) as <int2>.

5.5.6 Taboo language

In addition to these phonetic and grammatical variables, instances of taboo language were also marked because they seemed particularly salient during the transcribing process. Although the identification of these features is subjective, it was clear that different instances had differing degrees of shock-value and inappropriateness. Having marked them, I noticed several subcategories, each with its own impact, and these are shown below (with examples):

- General swearing: *it's just like . bullshit really* (Quality, Pennine-top)
- Humorous: *you can wear a pleated skirt or a really tight one like a slag*
[laughter] (Kat, Pennine-mid)
- Bodily functions: *my bum's really itchy* (Barry, Pennine-mid)
- Sexual references: *she likes fannies . not really* (Elma, Pennine-mid)
- Alcohol references: *get pissed* (Costineto, Valley Wide High)
- Drug references: *I have a joint . then fly to the moon* (Albert, Valley Wide High)

- Banter/insults: *I'd say man u are shite/he's an absolute turd face* (Wilson, Mill Town High)
- Under breath (which would not have been picked up without mic): [to self] *fuck sake* (Alice, Pennine-top)

These examples appear highly inappropriate in the classroom. They were coded with $\langle \rangle$ so that they could be easily found in the corpus and called on for analysis.

The identification and inclusion of this type of language is problematic because the pupils using it would know there were no real consequences to them in the context of this academic study. It is likely that many of them would not use such language in an authentic classroom presentation, especially if their GCSE marks would be affected by it. But, on the other hand, there is lots of evidence that some groups of pupils are willing to use taboo language in the classroom. A search for 'swearing in class' on one of the UK's most popular discussion forums for teachers returned nearly 140,000 hits³² with posts such as:

Over the last half term my two year 11 classes were swearing a lot! I would issue sanctions, threaten detentions and even joke with them about the consequences of swearing. Unfortunately it is a natural thing to use swear words in their conversations³³

Shacklady (2013) reports how a child in his class asked in a blasé manner if he could go for a 'piss'. Shacklady wonders if, in trying to challenge this language, he is

³² <http://community.tes.co.uk/search/default.aspx?q=swearing+in+class>

³³ http://community.tes.co.uk/tes_secondary/f/58/t/530253.aspx

‘fighting a losing battle’ or whether he ‘should admit defeat and lower [his] expectations’ McNally (2005: 173) reports how shocked new teachers can be when first exposed to classroom cultures in which swearing is prevalent, with one teacher commenting:

they just don’t want to be at school so they are like swearing, eating, throwing things about ... They live in a different world, they think that swearing is okay.

For the type of pupils discussed in Chapter 2 where educational success is alien to the family experience, where parents have bitter memories of their own school days and where the pupils feels they have nothing to gain through investing in their education, there can be little motivation to avoid the use of taboo language. Indeed, among like-minded peers having the bravado to make such an overt challenge to school authority could be an asset.

5.6 Managing the data

The study involved amassing a corpus (of approximately 225,000 words) with eighty-five sets of data; identifying and quantifying around forty different linguistic variants in two speech styles; and generating indices from approximately eighty statements, contributing to five social index pots across four questionnaires. The management and manipulation of this data had to be tightly controlled if the process was to proceed in an efficient manner. In order to achieve this, I developed an Excel spreadsheet designed to require minimal input whilst giving total flexibility of output. A more detailed description of the development of this spreadsheet is attached as Appendix G.

Prior to carrying out quantitative analysis the data had to be prepared and its integrity assured and the discussion below is a summary of a wider, more technical, discussion attached as Appendix H.

In order to clean and prepare the data prior to quantification, several techniques were utilised across five areas:

- Checking the consistency of pupils' responses
- Checking the effectiveness of each statement
- Removing 'crossed' speech
- Removing low-frequency tokens
- Removing outliers

The consistency of each pupil's responses to the questionnaires was checked by looking at their responses to statements which were presented twice (see 4.2) and comparing both responses. Where pupils had responded differently to a statement, for example, by strongly agreeing with it the first time they were presented but strongly disagreeing the second time, their data was deemed to be too erratic to be included in the quantitative analysis data. When pupils were found to have done this on numerous occasions, they were deemed to be too erratic to be included in the quantified data. This resulted in data from seven pupils being withdrawn from quantitative analysis: Kat (from Pennine-mid) and Patrick, Roger, Wilson, Sedrick, Taloola and Sunny (Mill Town High). The high number of pupils from Mill Town High proved to be very problematic here and this will be discussed further in Chapters 6 and 10.

The effectiveness of each statement was measured by looking at the standard deviation (SD) of the responses. The higher the SD, the more widely spread were the responses and this was taken as an indication that responses to the statement were teasing pupils apart. Where SDs were low, statements were deemed to have failed to tease pupils apart (because there was so little variation between them) and the statements were withdrawn from the social index pots.

Instances of ‘crossed’ speech were identified and removed from the quantitative analysis because this speech would not be typical of the speaker and might skew their data.

RF results made up of fewer than four tokens were removed from the calculations because, had this not been done, pupils could have been deemed to have a 100% realisation based on only two or three tokens.

Pupils who were outliers in their group were identified and their data was removed from the quantitative analysis. This was done sparingly and is discussed further in 6.3. This resulted in data from Marcus (Pennine-top) and Evan (Valley Wide High) being withdrawn prior to quantitative analysis.

Taking these steps meant that the data used for quantitative analysis was much less likely to be skewed by erratic or atypical contributions from pupils or by the inclusion of statements that were not working effectively. In order to verify the statistical significance of the data the Wilcoxon matched pair signed ranks test was used to compare HLs to LLs and Spearman’s ranked correlation coefficient was used to look

for correlations between social indices and linguistic variables (discussed in Appendix G).

When the contributions from each individual were pooled to produce group averages, there was a decision to be made about whether to pool the pupils' averages or their tokens. I pooled the pupils' averages so that each pupil contributed an equal amount to their group average. Had I pooled the tokens used by each pupil in a group, the data might have been skewed by individual pupils having a very high, or very low, token count for a particular variable.

By the end of my efforts to clean up the data, I felt that the integrity of the data had been enhanced without being compromised by too much interference. During the analysis, the methodological steps taken to enable me to monitor the integrity of the data provided some success. It was clear that some statements had not worked as intended and, at times, this has left some of my index clusters lighter and therefore less robust than I had hoped. I was disappointed in the high levels of inconsistencies in the questionnaire completion, as shown by the seven pupils whose data was withdrawn, and this shows that the notes of caution struck by many researchers about the difficulties in tapping into attitudes in meaningful ways (see 4.2) were well founded. The inconsistent responses caused additional problems because they disproportionately came from Mill Town boys – but this is also an interesting finding which will be revisited in Chapter 10.

In summary, the monitoring checks I built into the method proved to be painfully fruitful. They forced me to delve into the data, work through all of the calculations and gain an extremely detailed understanding of the data. This resulted in it being sharper

than it would otherwise have been but this was done in a controlled and targeted way which, I think, enhanced the integrity of the study.

Only at the end of this process did the analysis take place. The spreadsheet allowed total flexibility of the data and over several months all variables were subjected to systematic checks to see whether they were informative in terms of the construction of identities. For each variable, the data was sorted according to patterns between groups, genders, social groups and each of the social indices were explored. Differences between HLs and LLs were also analysed.

5.7 Conclusions

This wide ranging chapter began by discussing the development of the four classroom sessions. The competing requirements of the researcher, parents/teachers and pupils were explored, leading to the conclusion that the competing needs of all three parties had to be carefully balanced if the study was to succeed.

The testing process highlighted many areas where the method was working successfully, as well as areas where it was flawed and needed to be amended. The logistics around the questionnaires worked well and they were completed by all pupils without incident. The speech elicitation tasks were effective in generating good quality speech although I wasn't able to gather as much of it as I originally planned.

Gaining access to schools proved to be very difficult due to the pressures schools are under. The study involved some logistical work on their part and in return for their help and support, I was able to offer very little. In spite of this, four schools allowed me to carry out the study. My experience at Shadow High was a bruising one and perhaps

supports the findings of previous studies which show that some low-ability working-class pupils have little incentive to conform to the requirements of an education system in which they are doomed to fail. In response, they rebel. This was a setback for the study and took out one of the most interesting groups. The boys from Mill Town High also showed some nonconformist traits although I was able to gather useful data from them. Overall, the rollouts went well and a large amount of data was gathered.

Many of the efforts designed to make the study enjoyable and stimulating for pupils – the naming exercise, the design of the PowerPoint show and the competitions – worked well and contributed to the high level of engagement and buy-in from the pupils.

In terms of gathering and processing the data, the use of Audacity, ELAN, Excel and Word allowed the data to be managed in a way which offered total flexibility in the capture, processing, coding and manipulation of the data. Almost all variables were found to have complexities which had to be worked around (e.g. Silent /h/ on words such as *hour* and differences in /t/-glottalling word environments). The decisions made at this time were primarily designed to ensure the integrity of the data for quantitative analysis.

By the end of the data gathering, I had lots of information to sift through and it was challenging to make sense of it and identify the most salient aspects of it. But having put the work in prior to carrying out the analysis, I felt confident that the data that went forward was robust and pertinent to the issues under investigation.

CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL MAKEUP OF THE GROUPS

This opening results chapter will explain how the pupils were sorted into groups in order to facilitate quantitative analysis. The social class background of each group will be analysed and correlations will be drawn between this and the attitudes, behaviours, affiliations and cultural practices of pupils.

Once the data gathering was complete, pupils were put into groups so that the small contribution given by each pupil could be pooled into larger groups. This follows the established practice when quantitative analysis is to be carried out. For example, Eckert (2000) grouped her pupils as Jocks and Burnouts and developed sub-categories such as the 'Burned out Burn Outs'. Moore (2003) broke her pupils into named friendship groups such as the 'Eden Valley Girls' and the 'Pops'. The advantage of doing this is that individual idiosyncrasies can be ironed out so that group features come to the fore. The risk is that if the group isn't sufficiently cohesive, it will simply be a collection of individuals and any inferences made about the group averages will not be robust. In order to avoid this scenario, statistical significance calculations can be carried out to ascertain the likelihood that the outcomes occurred by chance or were due to controlled variables.

Whilst Eckert and Moore's groupings were based on 'communities of practice' built around broad social and cultural categories (Eckert, 2000) or friendship groups (Moore, 2003), the four groups which emerged during the data gathering phase of this study were based around schools and sets³⁴. As discussed in 5.2, the four groups were the top-set pupils from Pennine High (referred to as *Pennine-top*), the mid-set pupils from

³⁴ 'Sets' refers to the grouping of pupils according to academic ability. Top-set classes are made up of pupils with the highest ability in the subject.

Pennine High (referred to as *Pennine-mid*) and the groups of pupils from Mill Town High and Valley Wide High. Table 6.1 shows the make-up of these groups, subdivided by gender and colour-coded.

Table 6.1: Groups of pupils

Pennine High Top Set		Pennine High Mid Set		Mill Town High		Valley Wide High	
Alice	Doc	Dee	Abe	Pancake	Patrick	Eleanor	Albert
Bobby	Eugene	Doreen	Andrew	Rose	Roger	Faye	Albert S
Coleen	Fred	Eileen	Barry	Sunny	Sedrick	Freya	Bradley
Gilly	Humphrey	Elma	Benny	Taloola	Soloman	Freya S	Bradley S
Indiana	Marcus	Francesca	Chris	Vanessa	Vince	Gina	Christopher
Josie	Quality	Fredna	Colin	Wendy	Wilson	Gina S	Costineto
Keira	Robbie	Hanna	James			Harriet	Costineto S
Lauren	Steven	India	Jim			Harriet S	Daniel
Megan	Timmy	Kat	Lushuma			Isabella	Daniel S
Natalie	Victor	Kiki	Mick			Isabella S	Declan
Nora		Minnie	Orinal				Evan
Olive		Nigella	Pepper				Evan S
Olivia		Oh					
Penelope							
Phillipa							
Rosoin							

For Valley Wide High, I had two sets of data from nine of the pupils, recorded one year apart (recorded with an ‘S’ in the second year) as discussed in 5.2.3.

6.1 Social class indicators

As discussed in 4.2.5, two primary pieces of information were used to give indications of pupils’ social class background, parents’ occupation and parents’ level of education, and one piece of secondary information, the type of newspaper bought at home.

6.1.1 Parents’ occupations

Table 6.2 lists the occupation of pupils’ parents by group. Some occupations are ambiguous as to whether they could be described as ‘professional’ in nature, such as ‘own business’, ‘manager’ and ‘boss’ but I took the decision that pupils who had chosen

these terms were making deliberate decisions in how to present their parents. As such, I have placed these occupations in the ‘professional’ category. The breakdown of occupations shows a striking difference between Pennine High and the working-class schools, but also shows some differences within the two groups at Pennine High.

Table 6.2: Occupations of pupils’ parents

Professional career		Semi-skilled or unskilled	
Teacher, Manager at Rmail	Financial manager	Scaffolder	Care worker, builder
Therapist, professor of science	Professor	Farmer, environmental food officer	Plasterer, youth worker
Social worker, drug sector	Teacher, wagon driver	Builder	Nurse, wagon driver
Teacher, architect	Tennis coach, reflexologist	Beautician	Factory worker
Accountant, university teacher	Joiner, solicitor	Gardener	Hairdresser; builder
Teacher, advanced processing business	Teacher; graphic designer	Chef	Housewife; mechanic
Artist	Engineer, housewife	Security guard	Citizen's advice
Graphic designer, artist and writer	Teacher	Gran works at a pub	Nursery nurse
ICT consultant	Accountant	Mechanic, no job	Nursery Nurse, factory worker
Own businesses	Economist		Police
Solicitor	Architect; designer		
Runs a business	Own business		
Sculptor, social carer	Boss at community centre, builder		Status unclear
Manager of Topshop	Teaching assistant, manager		IT

Of the seventeen Pennine-top pupils who provided occupations for their parents, only one recorded a job requiring physical labour (Lauren; scaffolder). All other occupations listed are professional in nature, including two professors, four teachers, an architect, an accountant, a solicitor, two artists and a sculptor. The mid-set group from Pennine

High were mainly professional with some low-skilled occupations. In contrast, all jobs recorded from Mill Town High and almost all pupils at Valley Wide High recorded physical labour occupations.

6.1.2 Parents' educational levels

In response to the question 'do your parents have university degrees?' three options were offered: 'yes, both parents', 'one parent does' or 'no'. Responses to this question raised an interesting issue because twenty pupils wrote 'don't know' next to the question (or, from Isabella, 'how am I supposed to know that?'). When I looked at who had answered in this way there was only one such response from a Pennine-top pupil (Josie). Of the rest, a quarter of all pupils from Pennine-mid and Valley Wide High responded with 'don't know' along with ten out of twelve Mill Town High pupils. By looking through their parents' occupations, it seemed likely that they did not have university degrees if their jobs can be used as indicators. For example, three of the pupils who said they didn't know were Isabella, who recorded her parents' occupations as a mechanic and a housewife; Vanessa, whose parents are a builder and carer; and Wendy, whose parents are a plasterer and voluntary youth worker.

I decided to group the 'don't know's with the 'no' answers because I felt that there were two scenarios where pupils would answer 'no'. The most likely reason for pupils not to know if their parents have degrees would be because they didn't have one. However, if they did have a degree but their children didn't know about it, then it would seem that the parents were not advocating the value of having a degree and using their own educational success to encourage their children to pursue an educational path.

Figure 6.1 shows the responses to the question ‘Do your parents have university degrees?’ For the Pennine-top group, nearly 70% said that both parents had degrees and a further 25% said that one parent had a degree, leaving only two members of the group, Josie and Marcus, who said that neither of their parents had a degree (or they didn’t know). In the Pennine-mid, there were still 80% of families where at least one parent had a degree. Only one other parent from the Mill Town High had a degree and three parents from Valley Wide High. Only one pupil from either of the working-class schools said they came from a household where both parents had degrees and that was Patrick. However, I have to be sceptical about this because when asked to list his parents’ occupations, Patrick recorded ‘security guard’, and his data was found to be too erratic to be included in the quantitative analysis (see 5.6). For this reason, his data has not been included in these statistics.

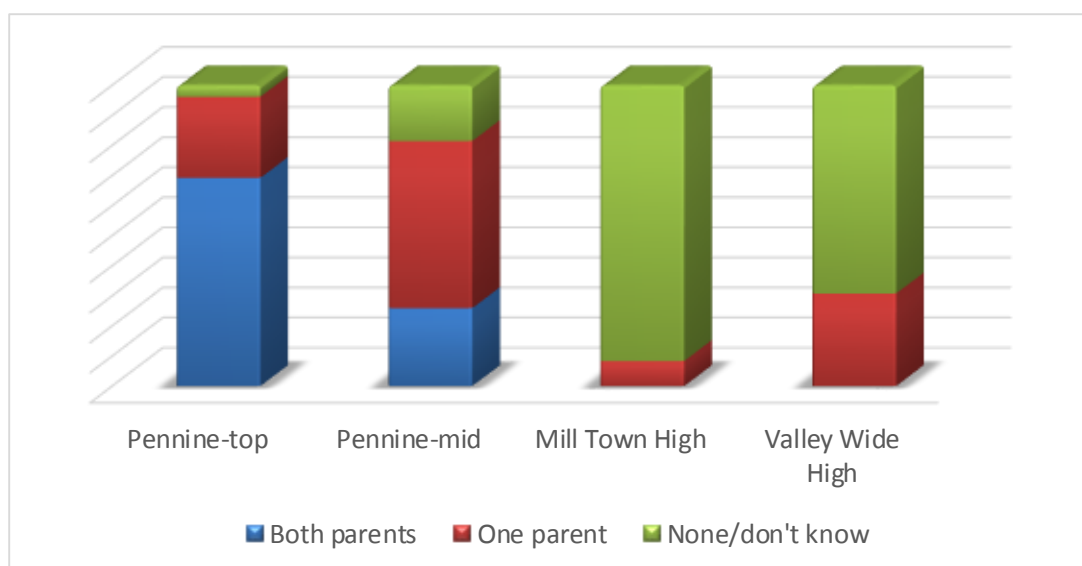


Figure 6.1: % of parents with university degrees

6.1.3 Newspaper readership

Responses to the question ‘what newspapers do you get at home’ prompted an equally stark distinction in the pupils. Figure 6.2 shows what type of newspaper pupils’ parents

buy at home, shown as a percent of the group. As discussed in 4.2.5, this has been found to be an informative social class indicator with middle-class people preferring broadsheet newspapers and working-class people preferring tabloids, a trend very strongly reflected in these findings. Thirteen Pennine-top pupils named daily newspapers and every one of them was a broadsheet. In contrast, no pupils from the working-class schools said they got a broadsheet newspaper at home, although two pupils, Evan and Vince, said they got a quality daily. The Pennine-mid pupils had an even mix between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers.

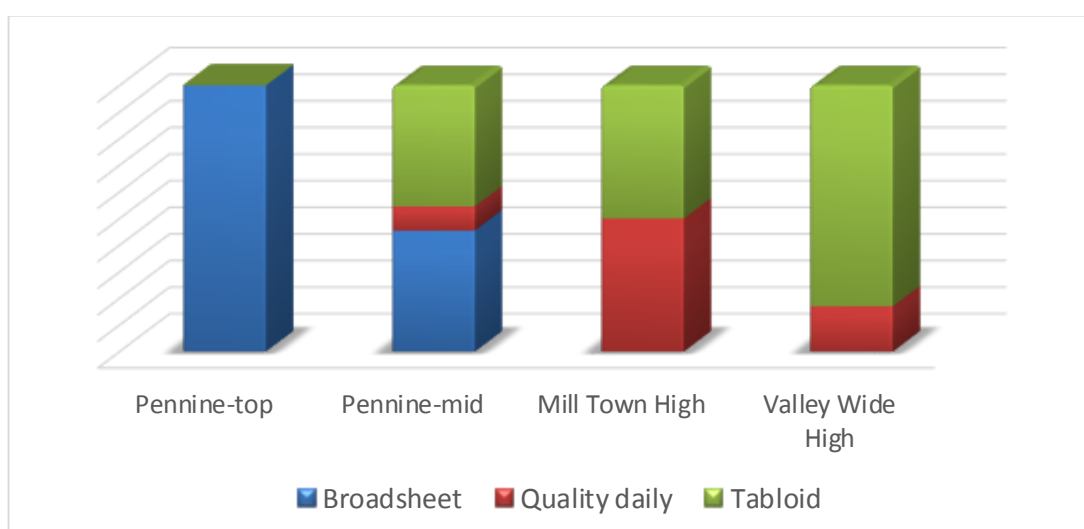


Figure 6.2: Newspapers read at home shown at % of group

6.2 Cultural traits

From these results, it is clear that the different groups are made up of pupils from different social class backgrounds with many Pennine-top pupils coming from middle-class homes and the majority of pupils from the two working-class schools coming from working-class homes. In Chapter 2, studies were reviewed which show that middle-class parents often inculcate their children with the cultural capital they think will serve them well in attaining high-status social positions through education and career choices, such as the importance of behaving and speaking in ways which they think will facilitate

social advancement. In contrast, many working-class parents are oblivious to these social practices and have little experience of investing and engaging in the education system. If these studies are correct then there are likely to be differences between Pennine-top pupils and pupils from the two working-class schools in terms of how much they engage with school and what hobbies and interests they have and these issues will be explored below.

6.2.1 Extracurricular activities

Seen through the prism of cultural capital, engagement in extracurricular activities can offer several advantages. On an explicit level, it offers opportunities for personal enrichment as well as the chance to gather evidence of achievements. Indeed, some of the Pennine-top pupils in Year 8 were already aware that their engagement in school activities could be advantageous: when I was recruiting for volunteers for the study, two groups of Pennine-top pupils separately asked me if they would be able to put their involvement in the study in their achievement portfolio, a document designed to record achievements as evidence for colleges. But implicitly, their engagement in extracurricular activities can be seen as part of their socialisation into the institution of the school which could help to develop the life-long habit of engaging with institutions, for example, through fully engaging with university and, beyond that, by building a career within a company. This is in contrast to many working-class pupils who more typically limit their engagement with the school as much as possible. These differences in habitus have been observed in other studies including Willis (1977: 36) and Eckert (2000: 156, 181).

In order to analyse the extracurricular activities presented to pupils, they were grouped under different headings because the research discussed in Chapter 2 showed that, for

example, working-class boys were more likely to take part in sports activities but to shun engagement with more intellectual pursuits, relative to other groups. Activities were grouped as follows:

- Sport (competitive): boxing, badminton, handball, football, table tennis, netball
- Intellectual: reading, creative writing, chess, philosophy, computer programming club, book club, debating club
- Artistic: Glee club, art club, drama, African drumming, keyboard, cheerleading, rock choir
- Other: fitness, DVD club, trampolining, survival, climbing

Figure 6.3 shows the average number of afterschool clubs that pupils take part in or would like to take part in, broken down by group.

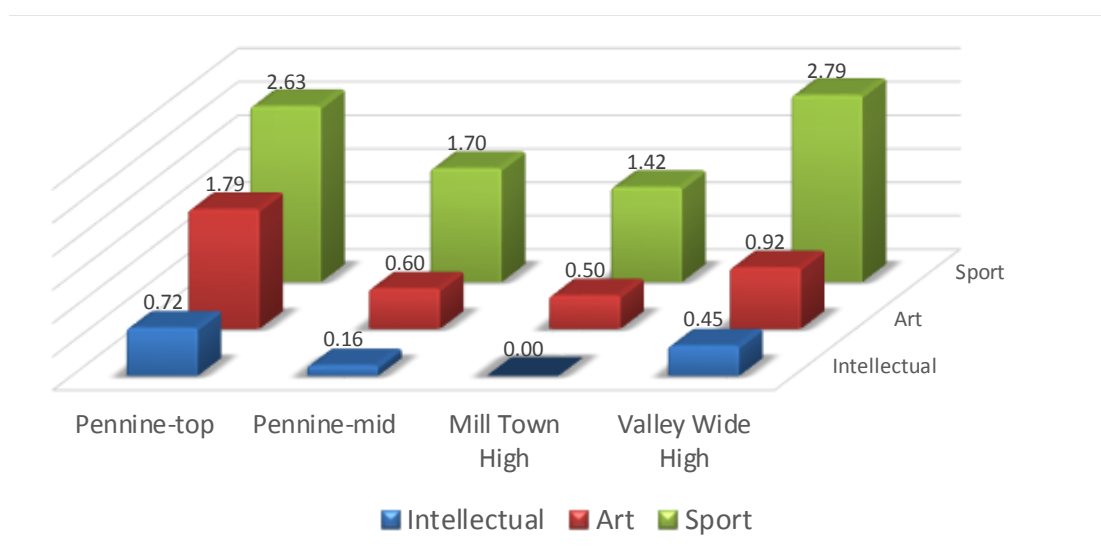


Figure 6.3: Average number of afterschool clubs attended by each pupil

Pennine-top pupils listed an average of 0.72 intellectual activity each per week, compared to 0.45 for the next highest group, Valley Wide High. However, the Valley Wide High figure is skewed by Evan who listed four of the five intellectual afterschool

clubs named by pupils at this school (Evan is discussed further in 6.3). Without Evan, the Valley Wide average falls to 0.15. Freya was the only other Valley Wide High pupil to name an intellectual pursuit, saying she would like to play chess after school. No pupils at Mill Town High indicated that they attended, or would like to attend, any intellectual clubs at all and pupils from this school also listed the smallest number of artistic or sporting clubs, suggesting that they are the group who wish to minimise their engagement with school the most. Pennine-top listed twice as many artistic afterschool clubs as the next highest group, Valley Wide High. Involvement in sport was more evenly distributed among the groups but, again, Pennine-top pupils were keen to participate with pupils naming an average of 2.63 clubs, slightly behind Valley Wide High with 2.79. Overall, Pennine-top pupils named an average of 5.13 clubs, the highest of any group and over twice as high as Pennine-mid and Mill Town High. Valley Wide High pupils were the next highest with 4.16 although this is inflated by Evan's enthusiastic response in the questionnaire.

This shows that the Pennine-top pupils are investing in the education system to a greater degree than those of other groups. Their enthusiasm for intellectual and artistic pursuits, relative to other groups, is consistent with the belief that middle-class pupils are more likely to take enrichment opportunities offered through the institution of the school. The low number of afterschool clubs named by pupils at Mill Town High was expected given the view that working-class pupils are less likely to invest in their education (see Chapter 2).

6.2.2 Clubs and hobbies

While 6.2.1 explored extracurricular activities, the questionnaire also probed pupils' active involvement in organised clubs. When pupils were asked to explicitly list their

clubs and hobbies, Figure 6.4 shows a social class distinction was apparent with Pennine-top pupils listing an average of just over five clubs and hobbies, the highest of any group. Pennine-mid pupils averaged just over three whilst three of the four groups at the working-class schools averaged just over two. There is also a pattern across genders in these figures with girls across all groups listing slightly more activities than boys.

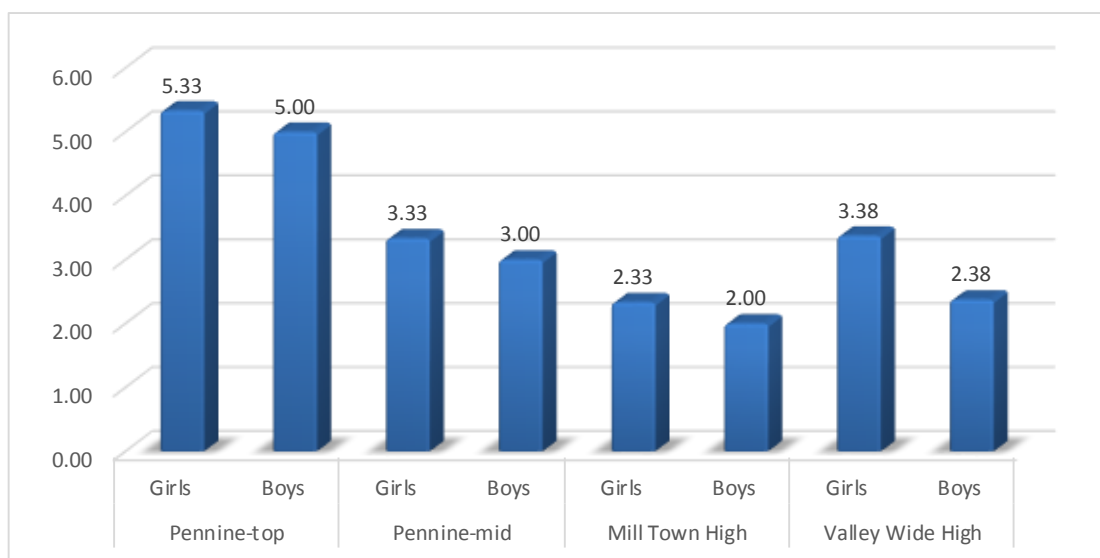


Figure 6.4: Average number of clubs and hobbies listed by pupils

But more interesting than the quantitative data is the qualitative showing the types of activities pupils engage in. Table 6.3 shows both social class and gender distinctions between the groups with boys from the two working-class schools having particularly striking patterns.

Table 6.3: Types of clubs and hobbies listed by pupils

Pennine-top		Pennine-mid	
<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
acting	airfix modelling	being happy	air cadets
astronomy	art	boxing	BMX
baking X 2	astronomical society	Burnley FC	cricket X 2
book club	bilang	chilling out	football X 5
cooking	cooking	computer	friends
dance X 4	craft	cricket	music
dolphins	cricket X 2	dance	none X 2
drama X 2	football X 2	football X 2	PS3 X 2
drawing	fun	friends	rock climbing X 2
facebook X 2	gaming X 3	going out	skating
fun X 3	guitar	gymnastics	sprinting
gardening club	learning	none	watching telly
guitar	none X 2	nothing	
horse riding X 3	reptiles	reading	
makeup	rock dance theatre	rounders	
music X 2	sewing	shopping	
none	skiing X 2	walking	
paelientology	snow boarding	xbox	
painting nails	star gazing		
piano X 2	violin		
reading X 2	xbox		
running			
shopping			
singing			
skiing X 2			
swimming			
tutoring			
watching telly			
writing X 2			

Mill Town High		Valley Wide High	
<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
ballet	dossing out X 2	acting	boxing
dance X 3	football X 3	cheer leading X 3	football X 4
fitness	none X 5	dancing X 2	going out X 2
guides	trampoline	drawing X 2	none X 3
horse riding	xbox X 4	facebook	science
kick boxing X 2		friends	xbox X 5
navy cadets		horse riding	
none X 2		kick boxing	
sea cadets		making things	
singing		none X 2	
swimming		pole dancing	
		reading	
		singing	
		sports X 2	
		talking	
		trampoline X 2	

Pupils from the Pennine-top list a wide range of activities ranging from shopping and watching television through to more cultural and enriching pursuits such as violin, piano and skiing, activities not listed by any other groups. This group also list several intellectual activities such as palaeontology, astronomy and writing. This has some similarities to Crinson's (2004: 208) study where he found differences between middle- and working-class pupils in terms of the hobbies and interests they took part in. Whilst working-class pupils were only likely to take part in a small number of activities – most commonly sport – middle-class pupils engaged in a wide range of activities, including 'rugby, ballet, tennis and badminton, Saturday jobs and activities such as scouts, guides and church groups'.

The most striking aspect of the results show above is the extremely narrow range of activities carried out by boys at the working-class schools. Of the fourteen working-class boys to respond, nine of them mentioned 'xbox', seven listed 'football' and four listed 'going out' or 'dossing out'. Only three other activities were listed: boxing (Albert), trampoline (Sedrick) and science (Evan). Eight boys from these schools listed 'none' when asked which clubs they belonged to. No other groups were found to have such a small range of activities which were shared by so many members of the group. The dominance of sport, and particularly football, among boys has been found in other studies. O'Donnell and Sharp (2000: 18-19) found that 'sport [was] of central symbolic significance for many boys, shaping their notions of masculinity and identity perhaps more than anything else', adding that football is often a 'key cultural resource'. Girls do not appear to have any such dominant activity, though 'dance' was listed by ten girls. However, this was scattered across all groups and girls who mentioned 'dance' typically also listed a range of other activities, diluting its dominance.

The near-ubiquity of football as a cultural resource among boys at the working-class schools is reinforced when some of their presentations are analysed. One of the HL topics asked pupils to talk about their hobbies and Table 6.4 shows how the girls talked about a wide range of activities whilst boys only mentioned ‘football’ and/or ‘xbox’. Of the six boys to choose this presentation topic, only Evan didn’t mention football and four of the six boys mentioned only football. This contrasts with the girls who were much more likely to discuss two or three hobbies.

Table 6.4: Hobbies talked about during HL presentation topic ‘My Hobbies’, Working-class schools only

Pupil		Hobbies talked about		
		1	2	3
Girls	Pancake	Sea cadets		
	Rose	Dancing	Singing	Hanging out
	Sunny	Painting	Drawing	
	Taboola	Horse riding	Cycling	Trampolining
	Elenor	Piano		
	Faye	Kickboxing		
	Gina	Cheerleading		
	Isabella	Dancing	Acting	Musical theatre
Boys	Victor	Football	Xbox	
	Bradley	Football		
	Christopher	Football		
	Costineto	Football		
	Declan	Football		
	Evan	Xbox		

6.2.3 Attitudes to Speech

When pupils were asked if their speech is ever corrected, and by whom, again the responses are revealing. In the Pennine-top group, eight pupils said that their parents complain about them /t/-glottalling; four pupils said their parents complain about them using contracted forms or colloquial speech, four said that no-one corrects their speech because they already speak properly and one pupil, Quality, said his parents complain about his over-use of *like*-DM. The only pupil in the group who has a parent who is a

manual worker, Lauren, said that her speech isn't corrected. Interestingly, two pupils in this group said that their friends complain that they talk too 'posh' or 'properly' ('my friends say my voice is too posh', Roisin; 'friends tell me I'm uncool for speaking properly', Humphrey). In this context, presenting a 'posh' identity is seen in opposition to 'cool', a dichotomy observed in other adolescent groups, albeit, working-class ones. For example, the adolescents in Rampton's (2006: 342) urban school setting felt that being 'posh' had connotations of 'physical weakness, social distance, constraint and sexual inhibition' whilst a pupil interviewed by Raey (2009: 25) associated being 'posh' with being 'snobby'. The discussion in 1.4.2 similarly showed how a 'posh' identity was seen as being a hindrance.

In the Pennine-mid, two pupils said their parents correct their /t/-glottalling, James' parents correct *less* for *fewer*, Lushuma's parents complain about his use of 'slang' and Mick's parents complain about him swearing. Pupils at Mill Town all said that nobody corrects their speech. At Valley Wide High one pupil, Costineto, said that his parents corrected his /t/-glottalling but the other features mentioned by this group did not involve high-prestige variables. Two girls, Harriet and Isabella, said that people tell them they talk 'like a farmer'. In this community, farmers typically have the strongest local accents and comparisons with them are generally derogatory with connotations of being uneducated and old fashioned. Daniel wrote 'people say I say 'chair' weird'. In fact, Daniel was the only pupil to have a NURSE-SQUARE merger out of the pupils at Valley Wide High. This could be because his family had moved to a different area of Lancashire where the NURSE-SQUARE merger is the local norm but continued to send him to Valley Wide High, where it is not.

So whilst for many pupils at Pennine High, matters of correct speech appear to be salient, this isn't the case for the pupils at the working-class schools.

6.3 Outliers

Having analysed pupils' social backgrounds and attitudes, there were several pupils whose profiles were at odds with the rest of their group. For example, Francesca from Pennine-mid who has many middle-class features: her parents are a doctor and a tennis coach, she moved to the area from Oman in the Middle East, she speaks several languages and her hobbies including singing in a choir and playing tennis. Her scores on the social indices were all more pro-educational than that of her group: *home culture* (0.83 compared to 0.77), *attitude to school* 0.68 compared to 0.57) and *aspiration* (0.93 compared to 0.73). Chris, another mid-set pupil, listed one of his parents as an economist and they read the Independent at home but, in contrast to Francesca, Chris' attitude to school was poor. His teacher told me he was capable of being in the top-set but was disengaged from school – and this is borne out in the scores from his social indices. On the *home culture* index, he accrued 0.75 points, higher than the 0.67 group-average (for Pennine-mid boys), but on the *friendship group culture* and the *attitude to school* indices he scored 0.44 and 0.42 respectively against group averages of 0.71 and 0.61.

These two pupils stood out to some extent but their group, Pennine-mid, was found to have a much more diverse range of pupils than the other groups which were, in comparison, homogenous. However, there were two pupils from groups which were not so diverse and who stood out very starkly compared to the rest of their groups: Marcus, from Pennine-top, and Evan, from Valley Wide High. Whilst I was very

reluctant to treat pupils as outliers, these two pupils were so far away from their group norms that they were found to skew the data.

Marcus did not appear to have the same middle-class indicators as many other Pennine-top pupils: neither of his parents has a degree, they never take him to the theatre or museums and they were both born around where they live. In many other respects, such as preferred occupation, Marcus also appeared to differ from the group norms and appeared more in tune with that of working-class pupils (although he didn't specify his parents' occupations).

Evan, a Valley Wide pupil, also emerged as an outlier because he appears to hold views which are much more pro-school and aspirational than his working-class peers at Valley Wide High. Evan scored 0.89 on the *Attitude to school* index compared to a group average of just 0.48. In response to the question *Where do you sit in the classroom?* he was the only person to say he preferred to sit at the front of the class, explaining that it was 'so I can get the most out of the lesson'. He was the only Valley Wide High pupil who agreed with the statement *When someone messes about in class, you should tell the teacher* and gave the highest positive agreement to the statement *I hate it when someone gives backchat to the teacher*.

Results from both Marcus and Evan were found to skew the data from their group and so their contributions were removed prior to quantitative analysis (all group figures shown in this results section have had Marcus and Evan's data removed).

6.4 Social indices scores

Having looked at the (qualitative) makeup of the groups, the five social indices will be (quantitatively) analysed to see how the groups fit with expectations. The expected pattern would be for the Pennine-top pupils to have the most pro-school home cultures and I expect this to spill over and influence these pupils towards pro-school friendship groups and attitudes to school. I also expect this group to be the most aspirational. But the discussion of Milroy's Belfast study in 2.4.1 would suggest that pupils in the dense, multiplex working-class communities covered by Valley Wide High and Mill Town High are more likely to be more deeply embedded in their communities. These pupils are also more likely to have lower scores on the pro-school indices for the reasons outlined in Chapter 2.

6.4.1 Home culture

Results from the *home culture* index suggest that it has been generally successful in differentiating pupils in the direction that would have been predicted: Figure 6.5 shows that pupils from Pennine-top have the most pro-school home cultures whilst pupils from Mill Town High and Valley Wide High have the least.

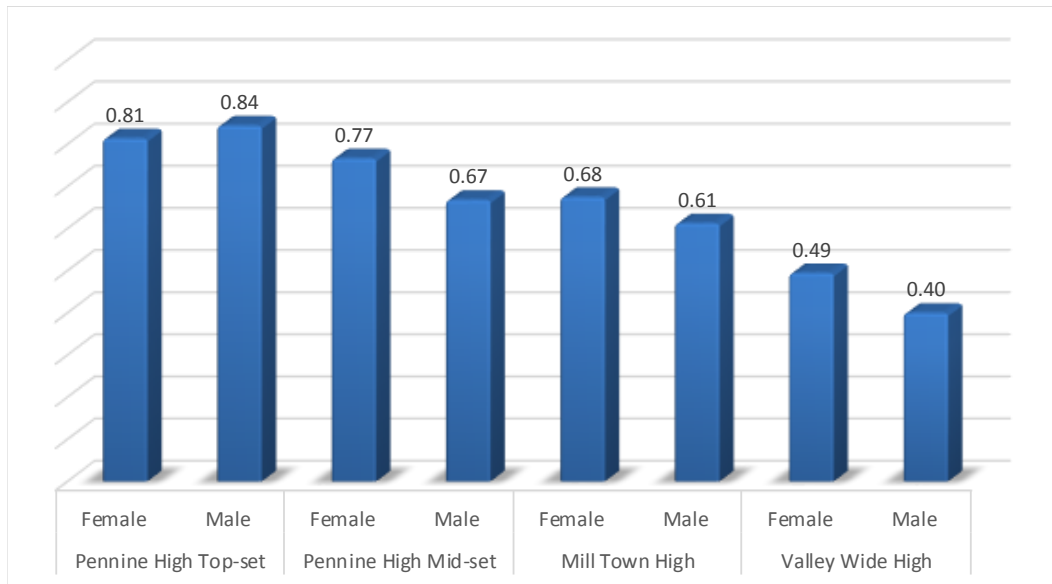


Figure 6.5: Average scores on *Home culture* social index

Outside the Pennine-top group, girls from all groups accrued higher scores than boys, which is an interesting finding. It is difficult to imagine that girls' families are more pro-school than boys' families so the inference is that girls are interpreting their parents as being more pro-educational than boys. This could have implications for the behaviour of girls and boys in school because some pupils are likely to feel under pressure to conform to their families' expectations of them and if girls feel that their families are more pro-school, then they may feel under more pressure to engage and succeed in school. From the data, it isn't at all clear why girls would interpret their parents as having more pro-school cultures than boys but it is possible that working-class boys, who tend to be more in-group focused (see 2.3), are more oblivious to, and less interested in, the attitudes of their parents. It is also possible that their presentation of less pro-educational parents is part of an identity designed to reflect the type of prevailing cultural antipathy towards education discussed in 2.3.

Table 6.5 shows individual pupils' scores from the top (shown in the left-hand columns) and bottom (right-hand columns) quintiles of the *home culture* index, showing that the upper quintile is dominated by pupils from the Pennine-top. There were only two Pennine-top pupils in the bottom quintile, both of whom have some working-class traits: Marcus, the outlier (see 6.3), and Keira, whose scores across all social indices are more similar to working-class pupils. Conversely, the first two mid-set pupils in the top quintile both have some middle-class indicators. Kiki, the first mid-set pupil in the top quintile, listed her mum as a teacher and

her dad as someone who 'makes film and posters and websites for schools' and both parents have degrees. Elma, the second Pennine-mid pupil, listed her parents as teachers, they both have university degrees and they read the Guardian at home.

The bottom quintile is totally dominated by pupils from Valley Wide High (sixteen of the twenty-one pupils) showing a tight correlation between social class background and having a pro-educational home culture. The absence of pupils from Mill Town High in the lower quintile will be, in part, due to the high number of pupils whose data was too unreliable to use.

Table 6.5: Upper and lower quintile scores on *Home Culture* index

Pupil	Score	Pupil	Score
Average	0.91	Average	0.41
Gilly	0.95	Freya S	0.50
Kiki	0.95	Gina	0.50
Natalie	0.95	Harriet S	0.50
Olive	0.95	Christopher	0.50
Olivia	0.95	Costineto S	0.50
Phillipa	0.95	Benny	0.48
Rosoin	0.95	Eleanor	0.45
Eugene	0.95	Albert	0.45
Elma	0.90	Barry	0.45
Indiana	0.90	Daniel	0.43
Humphrey	0.90	Mick	0.43
Quality	0.90	Albert S	0.40
Robbie	0.90	Bradley	0.40
Victor	0.90	Daniel S	0.40
Nigella	0.85	Keira	0.38
Oh	0.85	Isabella	0.35
Fred	0.85	Bradley S	0.35
Timmy	0.85	Declan	0.30
		Costineto	0.28
		Harriet	0.25
		Marcus	0.25

6.4.2 Community embeddedness

Figure 6.6 shows the results for the *community embeddedness* index which follow the expected pattern in regard to social groups but not gender. Whilst the spread of results is relatively narrow (from 0.36 to 0.67), the pattern between schools and sets is one which would have been predicted: pupils from Pennine High are the least deeply embedded in their communities and the tight community bounds expected in the working-class communities are reflected in the higher results from Mill Town High and Valley Wide High.

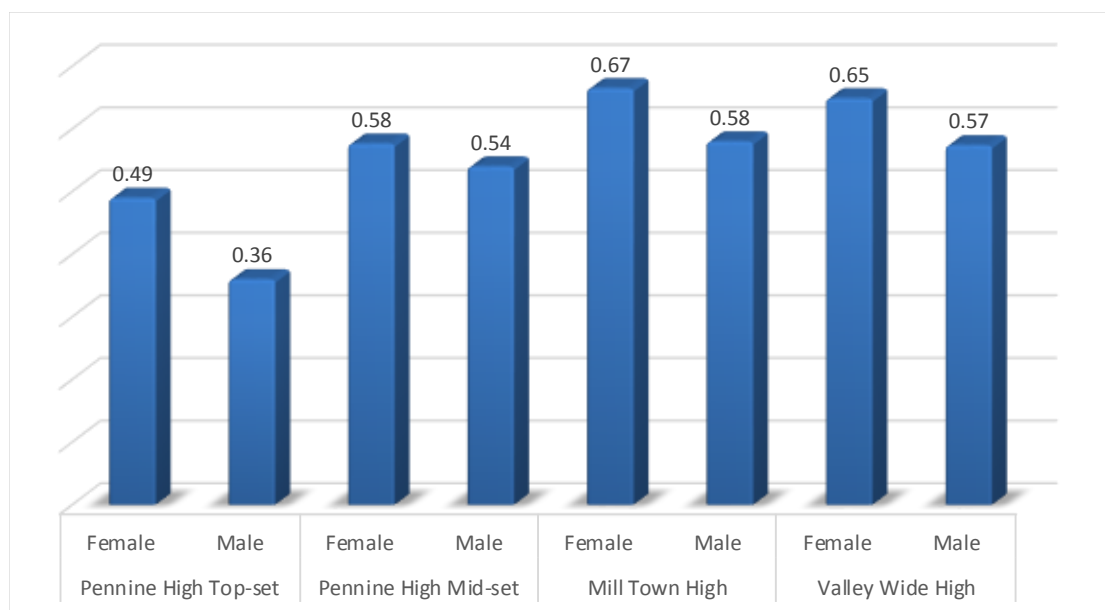


Figure 6.6: Average scores on *Community embeddedness* social index

These results show an unexpected gender pattern whereby females feel the most deeply embedded in their communities across all groups but it isn't clear from the data why this gender difference exists.

Table 6.6 shows the quintile breakdown in which only two Pennine-top pupils are in the upper quintile. Marcus is the most deeply embedded of all pupils, adding support to the belief that he is an outlier among the Pennine-top pupils. Over half of the pupils in the upper quintile are from the two working-class schools, reinforcing the link between working-class communities and tight community bonds. In contrast, in the bottom quintile over half of the pupils come from Pennine-top, showing the link between middle-class families and loose, mobile social networks.

Table 6.6: Upper and lower quintile scores on *Community embeddedness* index

Pupil	Score	Pupil	Score
Average	0.82	Average	0.29
Marcus	0.96	Hanna	0.36
Doreen	0.96	Doc	0.36
India	0.96	Timmy	0.36
Faye	0.96	Keira	0.36
Megan	0.90	Vince	0.36
Daniel	0.84	Robbie	0.36
Declan	0.84	Olivia	0.34
Isabella	0.84	Albert	0.32
Rose	0.84	Harriet S	0.32
Nigella	0.80	Eugene	0.32
Soloman	0.80	Humphrey	0.28
Mick	0.78	Hanna	0.28
Bradley	0.78	Eileen	0.28
Vanessa	0.74	Jim	0.28
Bradley S	0.72	Bobby	0.26
Dee	0.72	Natalie	0.24
Eleanor	0.70	Christopher	0.16
Wendy	0.70	Fred	0.16
		Quality	0.12

6.4.3 Friendship group culture

The pattern of scores on the *friendship group* culture index is, to some extent, as expected although the range is again quite narrow. Figure 6.7 shows that Pennine-top pupils have the highest scores, linking middle-class culture to having pro-school attitudes, but the other three female groups are only between seven and nine points behind. There is a gender split here with boys scoring lower than girls across all mid-set groups and this supports the generalised expectations about boys outlined in 2.4.

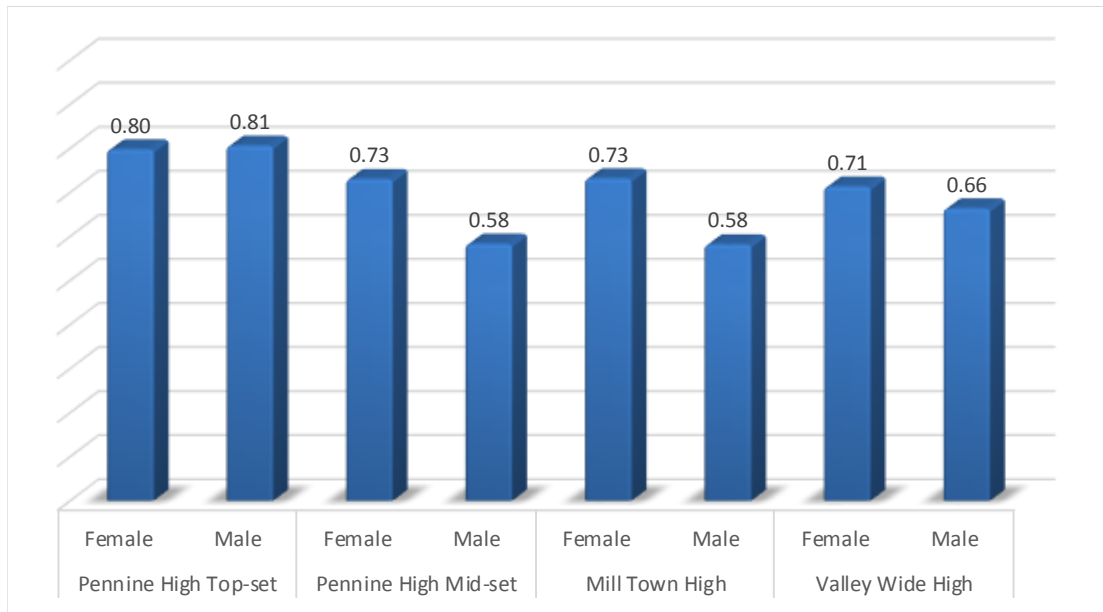


Figure 6.7: Average scores on *Friendship group culture* social index

Table 6.7 shows how Pennine-top pupils dominate the upper quintile of these results, whilst being almost absent from the bottom quintile. Evan was once again more similar to the Pennine-top pupils than to the pupils in his own school. Elma accrued the lowest score on this index and there is a lot of supporting evidence to suggest that she is embedded in a friendship group that engages in anti-social behaviour, which will be discussed further in 8.5.

It is noteworthy that the bottom seven scores are all from Pennine High and this perhaps highlights a limitation of the direct question methodology in this context. Pupils will inevitably be responding to questions relative to their own school norms and in a school with a significant middle-class intake with pro-school attitudes (relative to the two working class schools) Pennine-mid pupils might score themselves lower because they are comparing themselves, among others, to Pennine-top pupils. In the working-class schools where the culture is relatively narrow and homogeneous, friendship group cultures may be less pro-school than in Pennine High but are not judged against the high benchmark set by the many of the middle-class pupils there.

6.4.4 Attitude to school

Figure 6.8 shows that Pennine-top pupils have the most pro-school attitudes and the pupils from the working-class schools score the least. The gap between the highest and lowest group is considerable with Pennine-top pupils scoring more than twice as much as Mill Town boys. Table 6.8 shows that Pennine-top pupils dominate the upper quintile and are almost absent from the bottom quintile. Evan scored the third highest score on this index in both of the years he took part in the study. His score of 0.88 was significantly above his group average of 0.48.

Table 6.7: Upper and lower quintile scores on *Friendship group culture* index

Pupil	Score	Pupil	Score
Average	0.93	Average	0.51
Olive	1.00	Vanessa	0.62
Indiana	0.98	Fredna	0.62
Doc	0.98	Lauren	0.62
Natalie	0.98	Vince	0.62
Evan	0.95	Faye	0.60
Gilly	0.95	Robbie	0.58
Josie	0.95	Gina	0.56
Olivia	0.95	Soloman	0.55
Eileen	0.95	Bobby	0.55
Eugene	0.95	Albert	0.51
Victor	0.93	Colin	0.51
Francesca	0.93	Daniel S	0.47
Penelope	0.91	Abe	0.47
Fred	0.91	Benny	0.44
Doreen	0.89	Chris	0.44
Minnie	0.87	Keira	0.40
Phillipa	0.87	Jim	0.40
Rose	0.85	India	0.38
Kiki	0.85	Elma	0.33

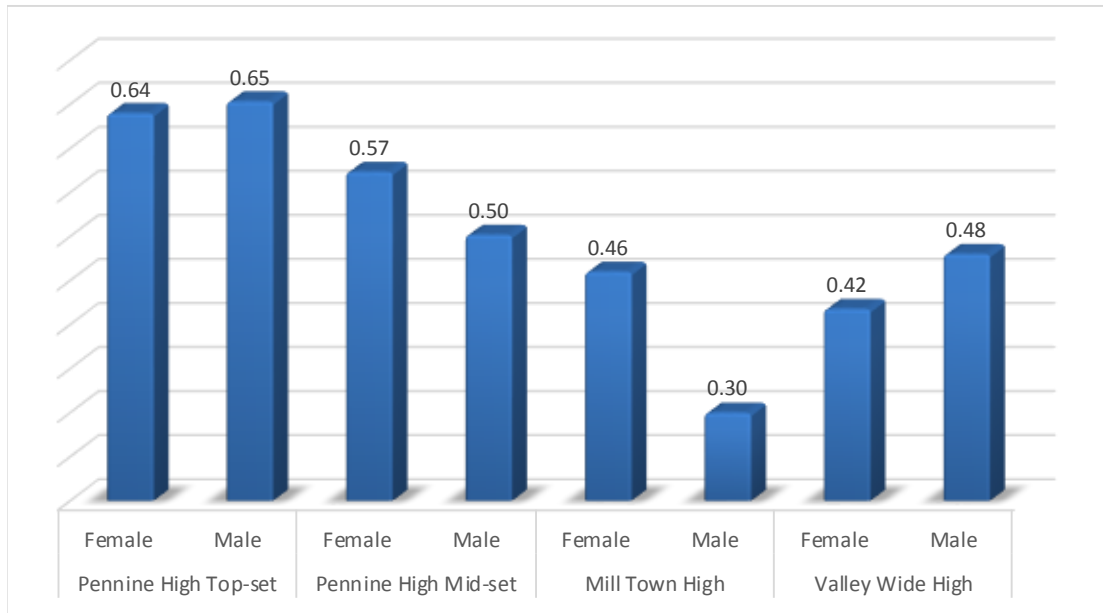


Figure 6.8: Average scores on *Attitude to school* social index

One of the two Pennine-top pupils in the lower quintile was Lauren, the only pupil from the group to list a manual occupation for a parent (scaffolder). In this index there were very small differences between the genders with the exception of Mill Town High where the boys scored considerable lower than the girls. It could be that the tight social networks at this school and the heritage of male working-class manufacturing and mining occupations (see 2.3) led these boys to feel that they had little incentive to invest in their education.

6.4.5 Aspiration

The *aspiration* index, as shown in Figure 6.9, follows the same pattern as the other pro-school

Table 6.8: Upper and lower quintile scores on *Attitude to school* index

Pupil	Score	Pupil	Score
Average	0.79	Average	0.31
Olivia	0.96	Barry	0.40
Eileen	0.92	India	0.40
Evan	0.88	Isabella	0.40
Evan S	0.88	Harriet S	0.40
Indiana	0.88	Chris	0.40
Victor	0.88	Faye	0.36
Bobby	0.88	Oh	0.36
Natalie	0.84	Dee	0.32
Humphrey	0.84	Declan	0.28
Doc	0.80	Gina S	0.28
Phillipa	0.80	Vanessa	0.28
Olive	0.76	Harriet	0.28
Minnie	0.72	Lauren	0.24
Hanna	0.72	Albert	0.24
Steven	0.72	Gina	0.24
James	0.72	Keira	0.24
Timmy	0.68	Jim	0.24
Francesca	0.68	Vince	0.16
Lushuma	0.68		
Bradley	0.68		
Bradley S	0.68		
Freya S	0.68		

indices: Pennine-top pupils scored the highest, at 0.86 whilst Mill Town boys scored the lowest at 0.54.

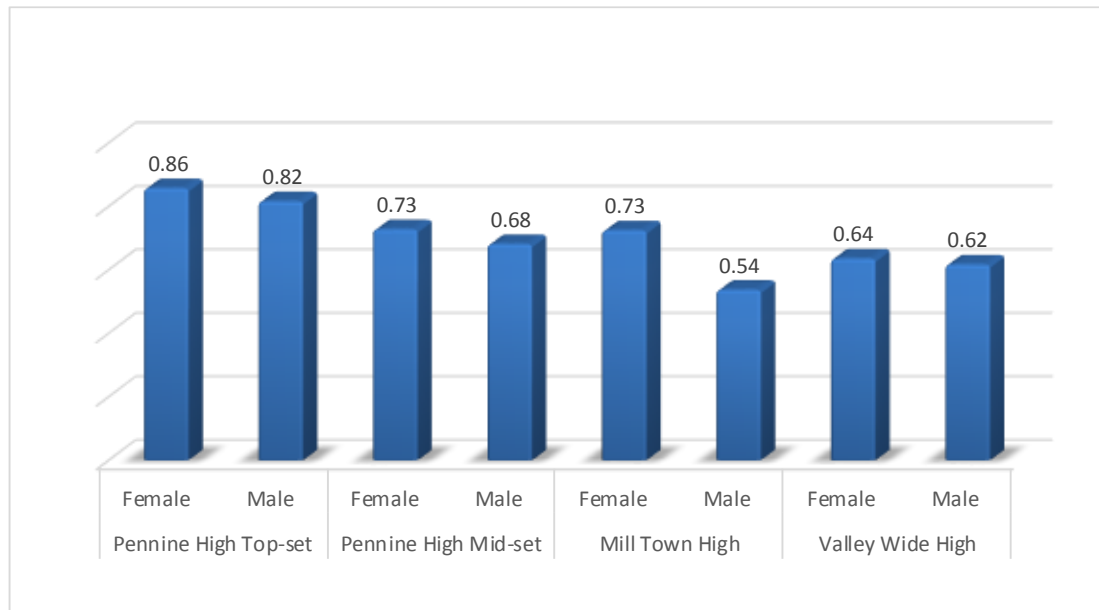


Figure 6.9: Average scores on *Aspiration* social index

Table 6.9 shows the pattern found in other pro-school indices with the upper quintile being dominated by Pennine-top pupils and pupils from the working-class schools being heavily represented in the lower quintiles. Once again, Evan would have had a big impact on his group average (had his scores not been removed) because he scored 1.0 on the *aspiration* index both in Year 1 and Year 2.

During presentations pupils were given the opportunity to talk about ‘My life in ten years’ and the responses to this presentation give an insight into how they expect their lives to develop. Table 6.10 shows what job or career pupils who expressed a view thought they might be doing.

Again, these responses show a distinction between top- and mid-set pupils: the majority of pupils who aspire to a career requiring a university degree come from Pennine-top and most of those who aspire to a job which doesn’t require a university degree come from mid-set groups. Of those who aspire to an occupation requiring a university degree, only Eileen and Francesca are from mid-sets and the only Pennine-top pupil who said he aspired to a job that wouldn’t require a degree was the outlier, Marcus.

Table 6.9: Upper and lower quintile scores on *Aspiration* index

Pupil	Score	Pupil	Score
Average	0.95	Average	0.51
Olive	1.00	Daniel	0.58
Evan	1.00	India	0.58
Evan S	1.00	Costineto S	0.58
Andrew	0.98	Benny	0.58
Alice	0.98	Chris	0.58
Oh	0.98	Soloman	0.55
Eileen	0.95	Marcus	0.53
Olivia	0.95	Albert S	0.53
Indiana	0.95	Barry	0.53
Doc	0.95	Faye	0.53
Natalie	0.95	Vince	0.53
Josie	0.95	Rose	0.50
Bobby	0.95	Christopher	0.50
Francesca	0.93	Keira	0.50
Pancake	0.93	Albert	0.45
Gilly	0.93	Jim	0.45
Coleen	0.93	Dee	0.40
Phillipa	0.88	Gina	0.30
Megan	0.88		
Fred	0.88		

Table 6.10: Career/job aspirations expressed during presentation topic ‘My life in ten years’ time’

Career founded on university degree		Job/career not requiring university degree	
Pupil	Career/Job	Pupil	Career/Job
Alice	Teaching at university/college	Marcus	Electrician, joiner, plumber, fireman
Humphrey	Student studying medicine	Barry	Chef or marines
Josie	Lawyer	Chris	Salesperson
Lauren	Architect or dance school	Colin	RAF as engineer or pilot
Olive	Palaeontologist	India	Helping disabled people
Quality	Architect	Patrick	Policeman
Eileen	Forensic scientist	Solomon	Footballer
Francesca	Surgeon	Daniel	Mechanic or in the army

6.5 Summary of discussion

This chapter began by discussing the grouping of pupils into schools and sets, and by looking at the broad social statuses of the groups. The close fit between pupils from Pennine-top and middle-class features, and between mid-set pupils and working-class features, is striking and there were only a few exceptional cases where pupils from one group appeared to be more suited to the other. Across the two main social class indicators, parents' education and occupation (and the secondary indicator, newspaper readership), the gulf between the Pennine-top and the working-class schools was almost total: no pupils from Mill Town High or Valley Wide High showed indications of coming from solidly middle-class homes on the three indicators but a small number of the Pennine-mid pupils did.

A review of pupils' extracurricular interests, external club membership and hobbies also showed a distinction between Pennine-top and the mid-set groups, with the Pennine-top pupils engaging in many more activities than the others.

The boys' interest in football and Xbox ties in with research which suggest that boys tend to have a more competitive spirit than girls (see 2.4) but they also support the earlier discussion showing differences between middle- and working-class boys: whilst Pennine-top boys engage in a variety of activities including football, boys from the working-class schools tend not to deviate away from the narrow group norms of football and Xbox.

For the Pennine-top pupils, it seems that several parents are inculcating their children with a belief that it is important to speak the right way but the two pupils who indicated

that their friends complain that their speech is too posh shows that there are social consequences for doing so in this community – at least among young people. This inculcation is totally absent from pupils in Mill Town High and only one Valley Wide High pupil, Costineto, said that his parents corrected his speech.

Whilst the Pennine-top pupils and pupils at the working-class schools have relatively homogenous backgrounds, the same isn't true of the Pennine-mid group. This group is made up of a mix of pupils from a broader range of backgrounds. For example, Francesca, whose parents are a doctor and a tennis coach, and Eileen, whose dad is a builder.

Analysis of the five social indices shows that they have generally been successful in teasing pupils apart in the direction that would have been predicted: Pennine-top pupils dominate the upper quintiles for the pro-school indices (*home culture, attitude to school, friendship culture and aspiration*) while pupils from the working-class schools dominate the *community embeddedness* index.

The indices also highlight pupils who do not consistently conform to one set of influences such as Chris who comes from a middle-class background but had a low score on the *attitude to school* index and, conversely, Eileen from a working-class background but with high levels of aspiration.

The data explored in this chapter has exposed big differences between the middle-class pupils from Pennine-top and pupils from the two working-class schools. These differences were evident across all indicators from parental social background right through to the pupils' own attitudes to school and levels of education. This reinforces

the discussion in Chapter 2 about how parents imbue their children with the cultural capital they think will best equip them for the future – and about how those messages go on to influence their children as they develop their own attitudes to school.

The data analysed in this chapter has also highlighted differences between boys and girls, particularly in regard to working-class boys. Across almost all indicators, working-class boys had lower pro-school scores than girls. The working-class boys in this study engaged in a much smaller range of activities, they (and their friends) had more negative attitudes to school and were less educationally aspirational. Traditional variationist studies might suggest that this is partly due to the tighter bonds they have to their communities and the solidarity and pride they feel towards their ‘in-group’ but, in this study, girls felt more deeply embedded in their communities than boys, confounding this belief.

This chapter has set out the broad social landscape for the different groups of pupils in the study. In the following chapters, the fine detail will be added to create a picture of how these pupils, from their different social backgrounds and with their differing experiences of exposure to cultural capital, use language to construct their identities as they deliver classroom presentations.

CHAPTER 7: PHONETIC VARIATION

This chapter will focus on the distribution of the three phonetic consonants; /h/, /t/ and /θ/. Each variable will be analysed to see how it is used by the different groups. Correlations between the use of the features and scores on the social indices will be explored. Levels of style-shifting between HLs and LLs will be analysed to see whether the features are being used stylistically to project identity. Gender differences will also be looked at and case studies will be used to add depth where appropriate.

7.1 Open class /h/-realisation

From the data shown in Figure 7.1, it seems that the spread of this variable followed the expected pattern: Pennine-top pupils realised the feature more than Pennine-mid pupils whilst pupils at the working-class schools had the lowest scores. Pennine-top pupils achieve over 90% realisation in both female and male groups which, given that some /h/-dropping will be related to linguistic conditions such as syllable stress, is probably as high as can be expected.

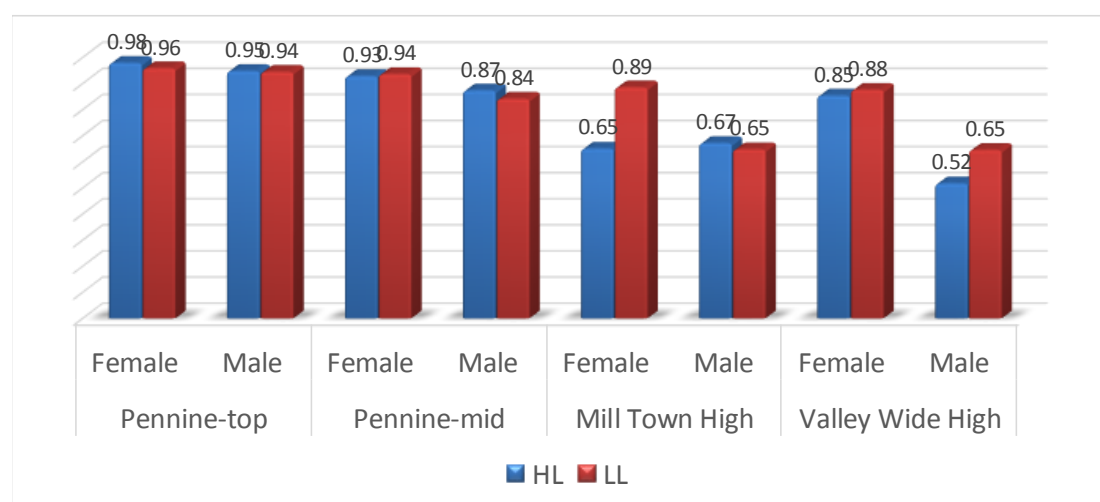


Figure 7.1: Open class /h/-realisation

This variable is not particularly subject to style-shifting between HLs and LLs. Pennine High pupils have little room to style-shift so their consistently high realisation of /h/ is

unlikely to vary too much between HLs and LLs and the pattern of shifting among the other groups is not consistent. Only two groups, Mill Town girls and Valley Wide boys, have sizable differences in realisation with both groups shifting towards the higher-prestige variant when the identity load is lowered.

Results from Spearman's rho show that the correlations between the realisation of /h/ and the four pro-school social indices are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), as shown in Table 7.1. This is particularly strong in regard to *home culture* and *aspiration*, showing a strong link between pupils coming from a pro-school home culture and the realisation of /h/. Results for the *community embeddedness* index reveal a negative correlation (but which isn't statistically significant), which was expected because working class communities are more likely to drop their /h/s and to come from dense, multiplex networks.

Table 7.1: Spearman's rho results for social indices scores for open-class /h/-realisation

	<i>Home Culture</i>	<i>Comm Embedd</i>	<i>Friendship Culture</i>	<i>Attitude to school</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
CC	.484	-.227	.149	.303	.382
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.062	.225	.012	.001
N	68	68	68	68	68

There are no great differences between genders in terms of /h/-realisation but there are patterns across the four groups of boys, with a steady increase in /h/-dropping from the Pennine-top group, through the mid-set group and into the two working class schools. Valley Wide High boys have the lowest realisation of /h/ at 52% for the HLs. This is consistent with the discussion Chapter 2 showing links between the use of low-status variants and working-class boys.

Table 7.2 shows pupils in the upper³⁵ and lower quintiles when ranked according to /h/-realisation, with *attitude to school* scores operating as a secondary sort criteria. For the lower quintile, all pupils with the exception of Jim are from the working-class schools and no pupils from Pennine-top are in the bottom quintile. Evan, the Valley Wide outlier, is third in this list because he realised all his open-class /h/s and scored highly on the *attitude to school* index. Pennine-top girls were heavily represented in the upper quintile with six of the top ten places and they also had the most positive attitude to school.

Table 7.2: Upper and lower quintiles of pupils ranked by open-class /h/-realisation and then by scores on *attitude to school* social index (HLs only)

Pupil	Open class h	Att to sch	Pupil	Open class h	Att to sch	Pupil	Open class h	Att to sch
Average	1.0	0.67	Freya	1.0	0.60	Average	0.50	0.41
Olivia	1.0	0.96	Kiki	1.0	0.60	Pancake	0.65	0.64
Eileen	1.0	0.92	Megan	1.0	0.60	Vince	0.65	0.16
Evan	1.0	0.88	Andrew	1.0	0.56	Declan	0.60	0.28
Bobby	1.0	0.88	Penelope	1.0	0.52	Roger	0.60	
Indiana	1.0	0.88	Quality	1.0	0.52	Wendy	0.58	0.44
Humphrey	1.0	0.84	Abe	1.0	0.48	Costineto	0.57	0.64
Natalie	1.0	0.84	Coleen	1.0	0.48	Vanessa	0.56	0.28
Phillipa	1.0	0.80	Marcus	1.0	0.48	Albert	0.56	0.24
Olive	1.0	0.76	Faye	1.0	0.36	Sedrick	0.55	
Minnie	1.0	0.72	Oh	1.0	0.36	Rose	0.50	0.48
Steven	1.0	0.72	Dee	1.0	0.32	Wilson	0.44	
Francesca	1.0	0.68	Harriet	1.0	0.28	Daniel S	0.43	0.44
Doreen	1.0	0.64	Gina	1.0	0.24	Jim	0.42	0.24
Gilly	1.0	0.64	Keira	1.0	0.24	Gina	0.40	0.28
Mick	1.0	0.64	Lauren	1.0	0.24	Costineto S	0.36	0.48
Rosoin	1.0	0.64	Patrick	1.0		Bradley S	0.35	0.68
						Christopher	0.23	0.44

The average *attitude to school* index score for the lower quintile is 0.41, which is much lower than the upper quintile average of 0.67. This confirms the link between /h/-

³⁵ The upper quintile, rather than being the top 17 pupils, is made up of all 33 pupils who realised /h/ at every opportunity during HLs.

realisation and attitude to school but there were pupils who dropped /h/ but maintained a positive attitude towards school. In particular, Bradley S who scored 0.68 on the *attitude to school* index but realised only 0.35 of his open-class *hs*. Conversely, four pupils, Harriet, Gina, Keira and Lauren, realised all open-class /h/s but scored below 0.30 in the *attitude to school* index.

One of the most interesting features of /h/-realisation is that five pupils ‘hypercorrected’³⁶ it in the corpus. This was the only feature over-extended in this way:

- when we go to x · [h]emma x always smells h^{z0}er h^{x1}ands (Elma, LL)
- you could end up in a job you really dislike · or even [h]end up h^{x1}omeless (Indiana, LL)
- [h]i do n’t care if there's a couple of rows but · the um uniform will change (Barry, LL)
- refusing to do what the teachers tell you will be a h^{x1}alf [h]ours detention (Doreen, LL)
- um the effects of drinking [h]alcoh^{x1}ol (Albert, LL)

This group of pupils have very little in common: there are boys and girls, some hold pro-school attitudes (Indiana and Doreen), others do not (Albert, Elma), some have high realisations of /h/ in their own speech (Indiana, Doreen), others have low realisations (Albert, Barry) but two common threads among the examples are that all instances of hypercorrect-/h/ involve open-class /h/ and were made during LLs. These examples

³⁶ the over-extension of a variable to word environments where it wouldn’t normally occur

perhaps highlight the mis-judgments speakers can make when trying to adopt an inauthentic voice.

Although style-shifting between HLs and LLs wasn't particularly evident in the group averages, there were occasions where pupils had large differences between the two and these can shed light on the identity load effect. For example, Christopher, one of the pupils who style-shifted significantly between HLs and LLs, scored 0.23 during HLs but 0.75 during LLs and the different styles can be seen in the following presentations:

My first day at school

h^{x0}i my name is · chris · when · 'm gonna gonna · this is my first day at school · before I left **h^{x0}**ome · I was¹ really upset · and I were^{<was0>} really nervous and scared · about going to my new school · um · me · my mum and dad · moved to an **h^{x0}**ouse · um and it was¹ · quite far away from my old **h^{x1}**ome · in – · when · I arrived · I was¹ I was¹ **h^{x0}**appy that I'd moved to a different **h^{x0}**ouse · but⁰ I h^{z0}ad no mates^{<f0>} · and then I h^{z0}ad to go to a new school · and then when I went to · when I · come^{<nsg2>} into the class · everybody was¹ looking at me · and I were^{<was0>} dead · dead^{<inf>} embarrassed and dead^{<inf>} scared · and um my – · the teacher · w**h^{x0}**o I first h^{z0}ad · there · she start⁰ed the same day as me · so that made it feel bett⁰er · and that were^{<was0>} my first day at school

New Head

h^{x0}i · um · I'm chris · and I'm the new **h^{x1}**ead of: · saint trinian's **h^{x1}**igh school · there is · a beh**h^{x1}**aviour · code where · is called shine · [laughs] and · we've got a new point syst – um point system · basically you're on a ten points · and you · lose points if · you um: · do n't h^{z1}ave · pe – um your equipment · you do n't

h^{z0}ave the school – . the correct uniform · or if you do n't do h^{x1}ome work · or
if you're late for class · then um . if you keep your ten points over the term · you
will be ent^{x1}ered in a draw · and you will earn a star · but⁰ if you h^{z0}ave six or
more points you will also be in · ent^{x1}ered into a draw but not as good · and
there is plent^{x0}y of after school activit⁰ies · like football and · many oth⁰er sports
· th¹ank you

Both of these presentations are about the first day at a new school; but the first one was Christopher's recollection of his own first day at school and the second was him playing the role of a new head teacher. When Christopher recounts the story about starting his first day at school, he is investing a large amount of his own identity in the voice because the story is very personal. This heavy personal investment leads him to reach for speech features which are congruent with his background, and this includes the dropping of /h/, which he does on six of the seven occasions. The dropping of /h/ is only one part of his identity construction, however, and several other local and low-prestige features are also used as part of this performance. He uses the localised verb form *were* three times, though his use of this feature alternates with his use of the standard form, which he uses four times. He uses the intensifier *dead*, the informal terms *mates* and *gonna*, he drops his /h/s for all closed-class words, glottalises all non-initial /t/s and uses the localised nonstandard past tense form of the verb *come*. Taken together, this constellation of features results in the performance of a very personal voice with a high identity load.

In contrast, when Christopher is playing the role of a new head teacher, he realises four open-class /h/s and only drops one. As with the previous presentation, the identity significance of the use of features can only be considered alongside a wider cluster of

features. There are no informal features in the presentation but there is vacillation in the use of phonetic variables: four open-class /h/s are realised whilst only one is dropped; three /t/s are glottalised, two are realised; and one /θ/ is realised as [θ] whilst the other is fronted. So whilst the second presentation has a more formal tone, Christopher is unable to shake off the use of some localised variants leaving him short of achieving a level of formality which is likely to be expected of a head teacher persona.

7.2 Word-medial pre-vocalic /t/-realisation

As discussed in 5.5, only pre-vocalic and pre-pausal tokens were marked in the corpus. In the corpus there were over two thousand tokens of word-medial prevocalic /t/ and just over one thousand tokens of word-final /t/. (In addition, there were 264 tokens of voiced alveolar marked but these will not feature in the analysis due to word count constraints.) Word-final tokens of /t/ were found to be much more likely to be glottalised by all groups and there were many pupils whose token count was too low to enable quantitative analysis. For these reasons, I decided to confine my analysis to tokens of word-medial prevocalic /t/, a decision which reduced word environment factors as uncontrolled variables.

The most striking aspect of distribution of word-medial prevocalic /t/ is that it appears to be particularly prone to style-shifting between HLs and LLs: Figure 7.2 shows that all groups style shifted towards the high-prestige form during LLs, suggesting that it is one of the most salient features and is involved in identity work. This is extremely statistically significant to the value of 0.000 on Wilcoxon signed rank 2-tailed ($p < 0.05$). This means that when pupils have a high personal investment in the voice, /t/-glottalling is one of the indicators they use to signal their identity.

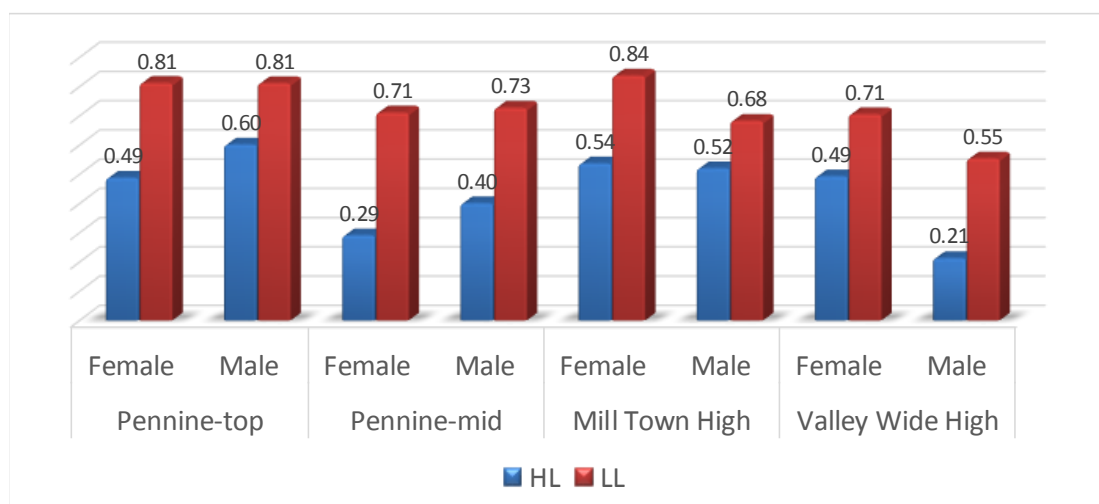


Figure 7.2: Word medial prevocalic /t/-realisation

The other interesting aspect of the distribution of this feature is that there isn't a big difference between middle- and working-class groups. For example, Mill Town girls realised /t/ as [t] more frequently than Pennine-top girls – despite the fact that pupils from Pennine-top were much more likely to be chastised for the use of this feature (see 6.2.3). It seems from this evidence that the feature has become mainstream across all adolescent social groups in this region.

Table 7.3 shows that *aspiration* is statistically linked to use of the feature at 0.007. /t/-realisation also correlates significantly with *friendship group culture*, possibly because aspirational pupils embed themselves in friendship groups which they perceive to be pro-school.

Table 7.3: Spearman’s rho results on social indices scores for word-medial prevocalic /t/-realisation

	<i>Home culture</i>	<i>Comm embedd</i>	<i>Friendship culture</i>	<i>Att to School</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
CC	0.168	-0.037	0.308	0.130	0.324
2-tail	0.167	0.762	0.010	0.285	0.007
N	69	69	69	69	69

Table 7.4 shows an extremely wide range between those at the top and bottom of the ranking in regard to /t/-realisation with four pupils realising all tokens and eight pupils not realising any. No groups dominate the upper or lower quintiles and, in fact, the data paints an unexpected picture in regard to the working-class schools: there were two pupils from Mill Town High in the upper quintile but no pupils in the lower quintile and four pupils from Valley Wide High in the upper quintile with seven in the lower. Pennine-mid also had a wide range within the groups with three pupils in the upper quintiles but six in the lower quintile. It is noteworthy that the three pupils in the upper quintile for this group all have parents with professional occupations. The pattern of distribution for Pennine-top pupils is more in keeping with expectations: they are much more heavily represented in the upper quintile with eight pupils, than the lower quintile with four. The lowest Pennine-top pupils in the bottom quintile is the outlier, Marcus (see 6.3).

Table 7.4: Upper and lower quintiles of pupils ranked by word-medial prevocalic /t/-realisation and then by scores on *attitude to school* social index (HLs only)

Name	Word medial t-realisation	<i>Att to school</i>	Name	Word medial t-realisation	<i>Att to school</i>
Average	0.84	0.56	Average	0.05	0.54
Costineto	1.00	0.64	Daniel	0.14	0.44
Eugene	1.00	0.52	India	0.14	0.40
Penelope	1.00	0.52	Nora	0.13	0.52
Isabella	1.00	0.40	Orinal	0.09	0.56
Wendy	0.88	0.44	Victor	0.08	0.88
Fred	0.87	0.48	Chris	0.08	0.40
Freya	0.86	0.60	Declan	0.08	0.28
Olive	0.83	0.76	Indiana	0.05	0.88
Coleen	0.80	0.48	Jim	0.04	0.24
Wilson	0.80	0.20	Kat	0.00	0.76
Isabella S	0.79	0.40	Bradley	0.00	0.68
Doc	0.78	0.80	Lushuma	0.00	0.68
Bobby	0.76	0.88	Eleanor	0.00	0.52
Francesca	0.75	0.68	Albert S	0.00	0.48
Andrew	0.75	0.56	Costineto S	0.00	0.48
Pepper	0.73	0.48	Marcus	0.00	0.48
Alice	0.68	0.60	Christopher	0.00	0.44

This table also shows that when scores on the *attitude to school* index are averaged for the top and bottom quintiles, the difference between them isn't great (0.56 against 0.54), confirming that the feature isn't strongly tied to attitude to school. Indeed, there are very high and very low scores for this index both at the top and bottom of the /t/-realisation scale. For example, although Isabella realised all /t/s during HL presentations, her *attitude to school* score was 0.40. Conversely, Indiana scored just 0.05 for the /t/-realisation but 0.88 on the *attitude to school* index.

There isn't a strong gender difference in the data overall but, as with /h/-realisation, both working-class schools had a gender difference with girls consistently realising /t/ more than boys.

The use of this feature, unlike /h/-realisation, varied significantly across all groups between HLs and LLs which indicates that it may be being used to mark a broad youth identity in these communities. In fifty-five of the eighty-five sets of data, pupils style-shifted towards the high-prestige form during LLs by over 10% compared to just three pupils who style-shifted away from the high-prestige form. In order to explore this I will look at two of Faye's presentations, an HL presentation in which she talks about her hobbies and an LL presentation where she plays the role of a TV producer.

My Hobbies

h¹ello . my name is faye . um . my favourite h¹obby is kick boxing . I've been doing it for . nearly . six years . and I'm a brown belt and I'm going onto my . next . my second brown belt . and it's really good and it's prop- . and it makes you . like¹ h¹ealth¹y . fit . and I h⁰ave to do ground fight⁰ing sparring . and . I'm just going on to my second brown belt now . and I'm doing the syllabus for it . and it's . it's really good and it's someth⁰ing what . I th¹ink's like¹ . it's a big . impact . in my life . and . I start⁰ed when I was¹ . eight . and . I've been doing it ever since . but⁰ I'm . start⁰ing to . slowly stop going but⁰ I do n't wanna^{<f0>} stop going . cos^{<f0>} it's really really really really good . so yeah . yeah that's . that's it I th¹ink . yeah . yeah I do n't know what to say now . predd⁰y good

TV Producer

h¹ello my name's faye um . I'm the producer of . I'm a celebrit¹y get me out¹ of h¹ere . and um . the people wh¹- . there's just . th¹ree examples of . people being in the h¹ou – I in the . jungle um one's amy child's . and we picked h¹er because^{<f1>} she's . really good . celebrit¹y . off . like¹ we did a . a survey . and many people want^{x1}ed h¹er in the big broth¹er h¹ouse . and then . pet¹er andre .

because^{<f1>} . h⁰e went in there before and · so h⁰e'd be a good ex- · like¹ · person
to go in · cos^{<f0>} h⁰e's been in there before · but we don't know exactly wheth¹er
h⁰e's going in yet · keith lemon · because^{<f1>} . h⁰e's funny · and h⁰e's very ·
like¹ · famous · and people · I th¹ink people'd love · well not me but the survey
· said that people would love · h¹im being in the h- · jungle so I th¹ink that's a
good idea · bye

Faye's presentation about her hobby is very personal, resulting in the voice having a high identity load. During this presentation she glottalises her /t/s five times (three times word-medially and twice word-finally) and doesn't realise them at all. The glottalising of /t/ co-occurs with some other instances of informal and low-prestige variants: the informal variants *wanna* and *cos*; the fronting of /θ/ in *something*; the use of the local intensifier, *proper* (although this is isn't completed and is part of a false start); and nonstandard relative-*what* (*something what I think's important*). But alongside these features are several technical terms which give the presentation a hint of expertise: she talks about *ground fighting sparring*, *brown belt*, *syllabus*, as well as referring to the *impact* of this hobby and these terms cast Faye as a knowledgeable person in this field.

When Faye is playing a role, however, she realises all five instances of /t/ as [t] as well as having some more formal features, such as the formal variant *because*.

7.3 /θ/-realisation as [θ], [v] or [f]

As discussed in 5.5, /θ/-fronting appears to have connotations of working-class urban youth and, as such, I expected this feature to be used most heavily by pupils who wish to signal both their working-class roots and their nonconformist attitudes. In fact, the

patterning of this variable was more complicated than anticipated and involved variations across social class, gender and attitudinal boundaries.

Figure 7.3 shows that Pennine-top pupils achieved realisations above 80% with a steady decline through the working-class schools. This data shows some unexpected patterns with Valley Wide girls having relatively high levels of realisation at 0.72 (HLs) and 0.83 (LLs) whilst Pennine-mid girls are lower than might have been expected at 0.56 (HLs) and 0.60 (LLs).

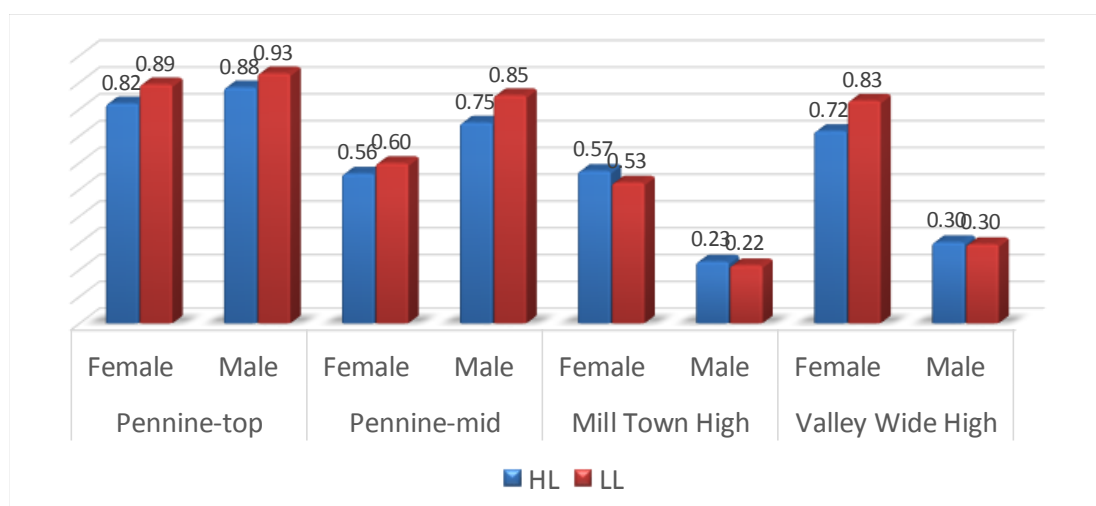


Figure 7.3: /θ/-realisation

Results from Spearman's rho show that the correlation between /θ/-realisation and scores on all five social indices is either statistically significant or very close to statistically significant, shown in Table 7.5. Scores for *home culture* and *aspiration* are highly statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) whilst scores for *friendship group culture* are still well below the threshold of 0.05. Correlations between *community embeddedness* (which is a negative correlation), *attitude to school* and use of the feature are just outside statistical significant levels at 0.051 and 0.055 respectively. These correlations offer

strong evidence that the fronting of /θ/ is an indicator that the speaker may come from a working-class background and this is further reinforced when pupils are ranked according to scores on /θ/-realisation.

Table 7.5: Spearman's rho results on social indices scores for /θ/-realisation

	<i>Home culture</i>	<i>Comm embedd</i>	<i>Friendship culture</i>	<i>Att to School</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
CC	.476	-.236	.300	.232	.352
2-tail	.000	.051	.012	.055	.003
N	69	69	69	69	69

Table 7.6 shows the upper and lower quintiles which reveal that pupils from the Pennine-top are dominant in the upper quintile, making up eleven of the twenty pupils who didn't /θ/-front at all, whilst being almost absent from the lower quintile. At the other end of the ranking, pupils from the working-class schools dominate the lower quintile, providing fourteen of the seventeen lowest scoring pupils.

Table 7.6: Upper and lower quintiles of pupils ranked by /θ/-realisation, including on the *attitude to school* index

Pupil	<i>th</i> -realised	<i>Attitude to school</i>	Pupil	<i>th</i> -realised	<i>Attitude to school</i>
Average	1.00	0.61	Average	0.14	0.50
Indiana	1.00	0.88	Keira	0.25	0.24
Humphrey	1.00	0.84	Albert S	0.24	0.48
Doc	1.00	0.80	Soloman	0.23	0.44
Olive	1.00	0.76	Declan	0.23	0.28
James	1.00	0.72	Bradley S	0.20	0.68
Francesca	1.00	0.68	Evan S	0.19	0.88
Timmy	1.00	0.68	Daniel	0.18	0.44
Gilly	1.00	0.64	Albert	0.17	0.24
Rosoin	1.00	0.64	Costineto S	0.15	0.48
Freya	1.00	0.60	Sedrick	0.15	
Eugene	1.00	0.52	Lushuma	0.13	0.68
Penelope	1.00	0.52	Evan	0.11	0.88
Quality	1.00	0.52	Wilson	0.11	
Fred	1.00	0.48	Roger	0.10	
Coleen	1.00	0.48	Daniel S	0.08	0.44
Abe	1.00	0.48	Vince	0.04	0.16
Barry	1.00	0.40	Hanna	0.00	0.72
Harriet	1.00	0.28			
Sunny	1.00				
Taloola	1.00				

Data from the upper and lower quintiles show a difference of 0.11 points in regard to the average *attitude to school* scores (with the upper quintile averaging 0.61 compared to 0.50 in the lower quintile), supporting Table 7.5 which showed that a correlation between /θ/-realisation as [θ] and scores on the *attitude to school* index was just outside the range of statistical significance. However, inside the figures the pupils come with a very wide range of attitudes to school. In the bottom quintile Evan scored 0.88 while Vince scored 0.16. Similarly, the upper quintile ranged from Indiana at 0.88 to Harriet at 0.28.

Table 7.6 also shows that boys dominate the lower quintile of /θ/-realisation with fourteen of the seventeen lowest scores and, unlike /t/-glottalling, Mill Town boys are

very heavily represented in the lower quintile (five of the six Mill Town boys are in the lower quintile). The data shows that boys from the two working-class schools have much lower realisations of [θ] than any other group. Figure 7.4 shows that these boys stand out in comparison to those from Pennine High. From the data, it seems that the use of /θ/-fronting has some associations with working-class boys who are not investing in their education but unlike the situation with /t/-realisation there are no consistent patterns in regard to style-shifting. So the data suggests that /θ/-fronting has strong connotations to disaffected working-class boys and yet it isn't particularly salient.

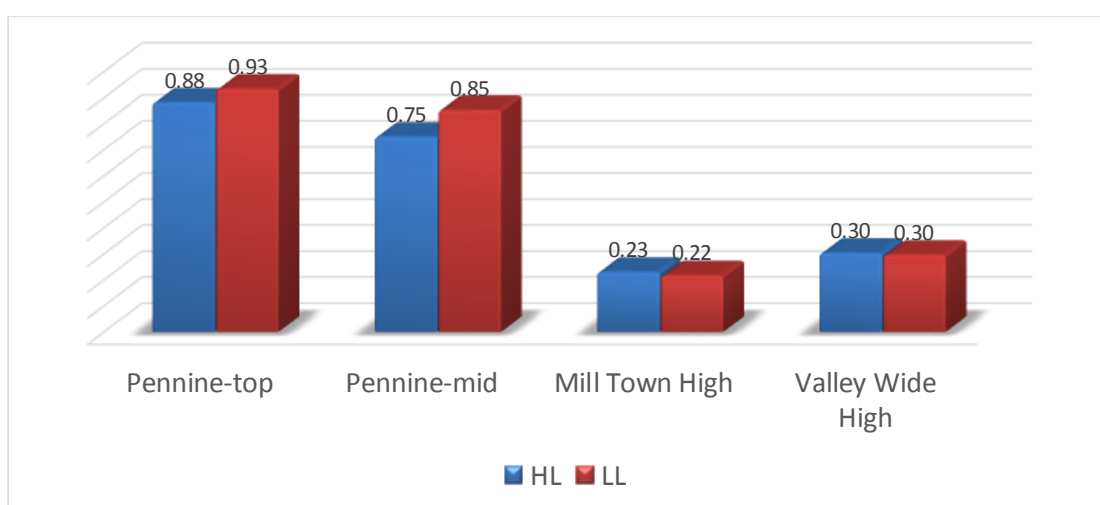


Figure 7.4: /θ/-realisation - boys only

Data from two pupils stands out in this data. Costineto's results are striking because of his year-on-year variance which ties into changes in his scores on the social indices. In the second year of the study I noticed changes in the group dynamics at Valley Wide High and the most glaring of these was the change to Costineto's status in the group and his overall demeanour: he was physically much taller and bulkier than he had been in the previous year and was much more assertive within the group. Table 7.7 shows the year-on-year differences in scores for the Valley Wide High pupils who repeated the study and Costineto's data stands out. In the second year he felt much less deeply embedded in his community, down from 0.64 to 0.38. But he scored his friends as

being more pro-school, up from 0.67 to 0.75. In contrast, his own *attitude to school* score had fallen sharply from 0.64 to 0.48 and his *aspiration* score dropped by 5 points. These changes show that over the course of the year Costineto had begun to feel distanced from his community and his friendship groups, his attitude to school had dropped and, at the same time, his use of /θ/-realisation dropped from 0.90 in the first year to 0.15 in the second.

Table 7.7: Year 2 compared to Year 1 for Valley Wide High pupils on phonetic and social variables

Name	Open class h-realised	θ-realised	Word medial t-realised	<i>Home culture</i>	<i>Comm embed</i>	<i>Friendship culture</i>	<i>Attitude to school</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
Albert	0.3	0.07	-0.33	-0.05	0.08	0.24	0.24	0.08
Bradley	-0.35	-0.3	0.52	-0.05	-0.06	0.07	0	0.03
Costineto	-0.21	-0.75	-1	0.23	-0.26	0.07	-0.16	-0.05
Daniel	-0.24	-0.1	0.03	-0.03	-0.18	-0.18	0	0.18
Evan	-0.1	0.08	-0.17	0.05	-0.16	-0.07	0	0
Freya	-0.1	-0.15	-0.64	-0.1	-0.08	0.05	0.08	-0.03
Gina	-0.6	-0.35	-0.2	0.13	-0.1	0.11	0.04	0.43
Harriet	-0.33	-0.35	-0.42	0.25	-0.28	0.05	0.12	0.05
Isabella	-0.06	-0.12	-0.21	0.15	-0.16	0.16	0	-0.08

The drop in /θ/-realisation was part of a wider cluster of linguistic differences which contributed to a different tone in the second year of the study. These differences can be seen in the two HL presentations shown below which share a common theme of sports lessons:

Costineto – Year 1

I will knock ‘em^{<f0>} dead because^{<f1>} I’m costineto . right^{<dm>} . being at accrington stanley h^{z1}as taught me a lot about football . I have learnt . the very like¹ intense training . we do train . four times a week which is very h^{x1}ard because^{<f1>} they are two hour sessions . we sometimes h^{z0}ave two games in a

week and they're not all close matches . I **th**ink the closest we get is h^{z1}aving a h^{x1}alf an hour away match . which is in Salford . we um . I've been there for **th**ree seasons now I've got um . been there for **th**ree seasons . um been offered **th**ree separate contracts . two two year contracts but⁰ I've still got a years left . at⁰ it . and then in two – in a few years I get offered a scholarship and . and then um . aft – we um play long matches in like¹ in Carlisle .talk about football . cos^{<f0>} I can play it . I've taught . a few people some skills at school like Gina . same primary school though that was¹ a long time ago and guess what . <^{c rapper}>

Costineto's on the mike see you in a bit cos^{<f0>} you're a trike

Costineto S – Year 2

um my favourite lesson . is probably p e even though I've already talked about this . but you're just gonna^{<f0>} h^{z0}ave to deal with⁰ it . some of the **th**ings I've learnt in the lesson . I learn every**th**ing me . and I go around like¹ . with⁰ a gun and every**th**ing^{<ge>} wi' my a k . spraying the h^{x1}ell^{<inf>} out of everyone I'm joking I just play football . chill^{<inf>} in a corner . wi' me bros^{<inf>} . no but . and wi' people wh^{x0}o do n't h^{z0}ave any friends^{<f1>} like¹ . well I'm not gonna^{<f0>} name cos^{<f0>} I do n't wanna^{<f0>} be tight^{<inf>} . but . a typical lesson in p e . would be . get changed . get like¹ . aw no . I'm not even gonna^{<f0>} say that . um . get changed . into um . p e kit . go to the sports h^{x0}all . chill^{<inf>} in the sports h^{x1}all for a bit . do a litt⁰le warm up . stretch the um . muscles . and um . then we do . say^{<dm>} . football cricket rugby . some**th**ing like that^{<ge>} I ca n't do rugby cos^{<f0>} I'm a *scrawny*^{<inf>} guy . and um . study lesson I – study cricket right now . and um . prett⁰y good . prett⁰y good . yeah^{<dm>} . not very good I got caught⁰ out . by a few like¹ . people I do n't like . chose litt⁰le people wh^{x0}o do n't h^{z0}ave any friends^{<f1>} got caught⁰ out by 'em^{<f0>} so that was¹ a bit⁰ embarrassing

The identity presented by Costineto in Year 1 begins and ends in an unusual manner: it begins in a bombastic tone by claiming he would be able to *knock 'em dead* and ends with a rap, marked by his statement that *Costineto's on the mike*. But the body of the presentation involves alternating between high- and low-prestige variants, such as *because/cos* and /h/-realisation and dropping. The discourse is informative and factual and, other than the unusual beginning and ending, the tone is generally appropriate. All four instances of /θ/ in this presentation are realised as [θ].

In contrast, the second presentation contains five tokens of /θ/, all of which are fronted. Other variables used in this presentation are mainly informal or have low prestige: he uses seven informal variants compared to two formal ones (e.g. *gonna*, 'em), six colloquialisms (e.g. *chill*, *scrawny*), he glottalises all seven /t/s, and drops three /h/s whilst realising two. These differences are also apparent in the presentation topic where the second presentation contains several references to conflicts between Costineto and various out-groups: the challenge to his audience, the people he would shoot, and *people who don't have any friends* who he also refers to as the *few people [he] doesn't like*. These people are contrasted with his in-group, who he refers to as his *bros*, an informal term with connotations of gangsterism. This sense of confrontation was a recurring theme in Costineto's presentations in the second year, as shown in the following examples:

1. I almost got my arm bit off by a crocodile · but I smacked it in the face killed it [laughs]
2. brought out a gun and tasered someone · and then I was laughing at him while he was half dead on the floor

3. this little kid [inaudible] on a scooter started screaming at me because I stunk of smoke · [imitating kid] *aw you smoke* I was like oh shuddup you little rat
4. there's loads of retards tryna like play cricket and none of 'em [laughs] can catch · [laughs]
5. round my area there's nothing to do · 's just full of boring old people
6. the police are dead annoying · and they just like harass you when you're not doing anything
7. x's done that a few times with his mum · his butch lesbian mum who looks like a rugby player

In addition to the confrontational nature of Costineto's identity, in the second year he also portrayed himself as someone who engages in anti-social and illegal activities (although the first example included a post-modified caveat indicating that it is not true):

- don't really care me I just go out . that's it . get pissed you know sa – stuff like that . joking bro
- I've just been going on a . sick head rampage nicking stuff out of people's bags · bit like . eight quid there x · eight quid for the whiz
- h¹ow teenagers should deal with⁰ alcoh¹ol · should get . smashed like every night · and come in school . laugh at everyone

The nonconformist nature of the discourse is accompanied by informal or low-prestige linguistic forms (e.g. *bro*, *sick head rampage*, *nicking stuff*, *quid* and *get smashed*) and the only /θ/ token is fronted although the tokens of /h/ are realised.

The identity constructed by Costineto in the second year of the study, then, is much more edgy, nonconformist and anti-social than the identity he constructed in the first year. These attitudinal changes are manifested right across the linguistic spectrum in his use of phonetic features, lexical features and in the wider discourse.

The other interesting results came from Evan (identified as an outlier in 6.3) who had a very low realisation rate for /θ/-realisation at 0.11 (HL) and 0.17 (LL) compared to his group average of 0.30 (HL) and 0.30 (LL). This is in sharp contrast to the other two phonetic variables where Evan has a far higher level of realisation: he doesn't drop any open-class /h/s at all in HLs or LLs, his /t/-realisation levels were 0.60 (for HLs) and 1.0 (for LLs) compared to his group averages of 0.20 and 0.60 respectively. This gives his speech a unique style in the data which is largely formal with high-prestige features other than this one, as shown in this extract where Evan is playing the role of a police chief talking about how he would deal with youth issues:

we're trying to crack down on vandalism · the operation is operation eagle · and
but- um I deployed several men to go and · take- tackle these vandalisms · wh^{x1}o
seem to th⁰ink it's okay to graffiti all the walls · with⁰ many colours and · th⁰ings
· if they want to do this they should h^{z0}ave become artists

Here Evan's /θ/-fronting seems unusual in a police chief. He realises the only open class /h/ in the extract and he uses the formal *want to* rather than *wanna*. So why might Evan front his /θ/s with such relative high frequency? In 6.3, Evan was shown to be a social outlier in his group because he is well embedded in the institution of the school and is highly aspirational. He held one of the lowest statuses in the group and was the

pupil most frequently heckled; for example, during this SGD involving Evan and Costineto:

Costineto: facebook is for chatting up birds . and socially socialising when you've got more than forty-five friends X [laughter]

Evan: my turn . right that was very rude . right . I think . facebook-

Costineto: -that's what I've just done . idiot

Evan: oh next one then

In this exchange, Costineto mocks Evan for not having many friends on facebook (and uses Evan's real name, which has been replaced with X to comply with privacy requirements). The insult is met with laughter from the other boys and Evan complains meekly that Costineto is being rude to him. When Evan tries to contribute to a discussion on a topic they have been given, Costineto (who has misunderstood the instructions) wrongly tells Evan he is mistaken, calling him an *idiot* and Evan, showing the low status he holds in the group, accepts this correction. Examples of his low status can also be seen during his presentations when he was treated in a disrespectful manner by his peers:

um . my oth⁰er broth⁰er . argh st – I h²⁰ave a dog as well . called robbie .
[heckled] . and we also h⁰ave to take it to um . for a walk every day . and then
um . also I h⁰a – I h⁰ave to um . feed the dog . dog food . GET OFF ME . you
paedophile

but more would make people very h¹appy · [heckled] · um . at the moment · at
this moment in time I h¹ave th⁰ree silvers I should h¹ave my gold in a few days
· um · [to heckler] you can talk about this when it's your go

These instances show that Evan, despite being considered the cleverest class member, does not enjoy a high status within the group: he is interrupted by other boys and he is even physically jostled. But although he was not at the core of the group, he had negotiated a position as a quirky free-thinking member of the class and, as a result, was often embraced by them because he was non-threatening. Evan's use of /θ/-fronting, therefore, could be being used as an act of accommodation towards Costineto and the other nonconformist members of his peer group, designed to chip the edges off his reputation as a 'swot' and gain him acceptance by the group.

There is other supporting evidence for this theory in the data. When Evan was asked to list his hobbies and interests he was the only Valley Wide boy to deviate at all from the narrow list of 'none', 'football', 'xbox' and hanging out with friends. Evan listed all of these but he also listed 'science' (and 'Eureka', a science club he attended). Having done this, however, he completed his list with 'sleeping'. As an intelligent, articulate and aspirational pupil, this is not the type of interest he might have been expected list and, I believe, this was included in order to mitigate his pro-school identity and fit in with the norms of the wider classroom culture and avoid the imposition of social sanctions. This was also evident during the New Head presentations, as will be discussed in 9.3.

7.4 Summary of discussion

The results in this chapter show a complex pattern of interconnectedness between pupils; their social backgrounds and social attitudes; and the linguistic forms they use in their construction of social identities. Each phonetic feature was found to have a distinct pattern of usage in regard to social and gender differences, as well as differences in levels of style-shifting between HLs and LLs. But a broad pattern was evident which showed that the middle-class pupils at Pennine High used the most high-prestige forms whilst working-class boys, in particular, used more of the low-status variants.

Levels of open-class /h/-realisation were above 0.50 for all groups but there was evidence of social class differences. For pupils at the working-class schools, levels of realisation were much lower than they were at Pennine High. This could be because consistent /h/-realisation in open-class words would not be congruent with the community norms and the wide-scale realisation of /h/ as [h] could trigger claims of disingenuousness. This is particularly true for boys at the working-class schools who drop /h/ much more than any other group.

There was evidence that word-medial /t/-glottalling may be linked to the performance of a youth identity across all social groups – but without any connotations of ‘street’ language inferred by some parents. This feature is the target of ‘correction’ by several middle-class parents and many pupils dropped it when playing a role, but it is still widely used by Pennine-top pupils.

For /θ/-fronting, there was some evidence that the feature marks affiliation to working-class communities, especially among boys. Furthermore, it may particularly connote a

sub-section of working-class boys who are disaffected with school, as shown by Costineto's increased use of the feature in Year 2 and the correlation between its use and scores on the *attitude to school* index. However, I speculate that Evan may be using the feature quite differently and may have adopted it as part of a strategy to ingratiate himself with the nonconformist members of his class who form the dominant group.

The different patterns for /h/ and /t/, whereby pupils shift towards the high-prestige form during LLs in regard to /t/ not in regard to /h/, are interesting. The two features are in opposite states of trajectory, as discussed in 5.5: /t/-glottaling is an incoming variant but /h/-dropping is in decline. As such, /t/-glottaling may resonate with young people as an 'in vogue' feature in a way that /h/-dropping would not. But in discussions, pupils were generally aware of /h/-dropping but many of them couldn't clearly identify /t/-glottaling until it was explained to them. There are differences between the two features which could explain why /h/ would be more salient than /t/: word-medial /t/ can be a coda sound whereas /h/ always occurs in an onset position and /h/-dropping is a much older and more established accent feature than is /t/-glottaling (see 5.5). But, on the other hand, the articulatory difference between /t/-realisation and glottaling is bigger than it is for /h/-realisation and dropping which might suggest that it would be more, not less, salient.

Data showing upper and lower quintiles when pupils are ranked according to phonetic variables (with a secondary sort criteria of *attitude to school*) shows interesting patterns across all variables. In regard to /θ/ and /h/ realisations, the upper quintiles are almost exclusive to the two groups from Pennine High whilst the lower quintiles are almost exclusive to pupils from the working-class schools, showing that the features are being used as part of the construction of local social identities. However, this isn't the case

for word-medial prevocalic /t/ which has a more even spread among all groups both in the upper and lower quintiles. Kerswill (2000: 78) observed that /t/-glottaling was becoming more widely accepted among middle-class speakers (although, at that stage, not intervocalically) whilst /h/-dropping was ‘extremely rare’ among middle-class speakers, which offers some explanations for this pattern.

Whilst patterns were clearly evident in the data, there were always some pupils who stood out as being exceptions to the norms of their groups. In regard to /t/-realisation, Harriet realised all /t/s as [t] but had a very low score on the *attitude to school* index whilst Indiana glottalised most of her /t/s but scored highly for *attitude to school*. Evan fronted almost 90% of his /θ/s but had one of the highest scores for *attitude to school*, Hanna fronted all /θ/s during HLs but scored highly on the *attitude to school* index and, conversely, Harriet and Dee realised all /θ/s but had very low scores on the *attitude to school* scale. In regard to /h/-realisation, Bradley dropped most of his /h/s but maintained a high score on attitude to school whilst Lauren, Gina and Keira all realised their /h/s but had very low scores on the *attitude to school* index.

This shows that attitudes cannot be inferred from the use of phonetic features and any attempt to make such inferences can lead to unfair negative evaluations being made against speakers. This is detrimental to the speaker who would be being unfairly treated but also, I would argue, it can be detrimental to the interests of the person making the negative judgment because, for example, it could result in them choosing the wrong candidate for a job by discriminating against a speaker’s accent.

One of the most interesting findings was hypercorrect-/h/. The pupils who overextended /h/ came from a wide mix of backgrounds and held different opinions on

school but, interestingly, all instances occurring during LLs. This suggests that having to cross out of an authentic voice can be linguistically challenging and can lead to mistakes that don't seem to occur when pupils are free to speak in their own voice.

In 1.4.1, it was pointed out that Brian Cox justified the NC having a tolerant attitude to accents whilst simultaneously prescribing spoken SE by arguing that accents show where you come from and should be a source of pride. But the three most salient accent features, /h/-dropping, /t/-glottalling and /θ/-fronting are not geographically based and are all found throughout England. /h/-dropping has been an indicator of working-class speech across England for many decades, if not centuries; /t/-glottalling is in the process of sweeping across middle-class accents, having become established through working-class accents; and /θ/-fronting continues to connote working-class youth culture across the country.

CHAPTER 8: LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL VARIATION

The previous chapter focused on variation at the phonological level and whilst this revealed some interesting patterns in regard to how identities are constructed, the personal aspect of meaning-making is difficult to see in context with predominantly quantitative methods. This chapter will focus on variation at the lexical and grammatical level where the relatively infrequent occurrences of nonstandard features necessitates a more qualitative methodology. During the transcription process, many lexico-grammatical variables were identified as being potentially interesting (as shown by the number of features marked, see 5.5), but this discussion will be restricted to those features which appear to offer interesting insights into how identities are constructed.

I begin this chapter by analysing the use of DAR and *were-for-was*, features with well-established associations with northern English dialects. Other features are more problematic to interpret because they are linked to more complex sets of associations which may be different for different groups. I explore the use of two intensifiers, *well* and *proper*; the use of taboo language; and the use of *like-DM*, a feature with interesting patterns across a range of speakers.

8.1 Definite Article Reduction

DAR, along with *were-for-was*, is closely associated with northern English dialects and has acquired the status of stereotype (in Labov's terms), so it isn't surprising that the pupils at the working-class schools have the highest number of pupils who have the feature in their repertoire, as shown in Figure 8.1. Around 70% of Mill Town High pupils and 40% of Valley Wide High pupils used the feature during classroom presentations, compared to around 20% for both Pennine High groups. More girls have the feature than boys in Pennine-mid and Mill Town High.

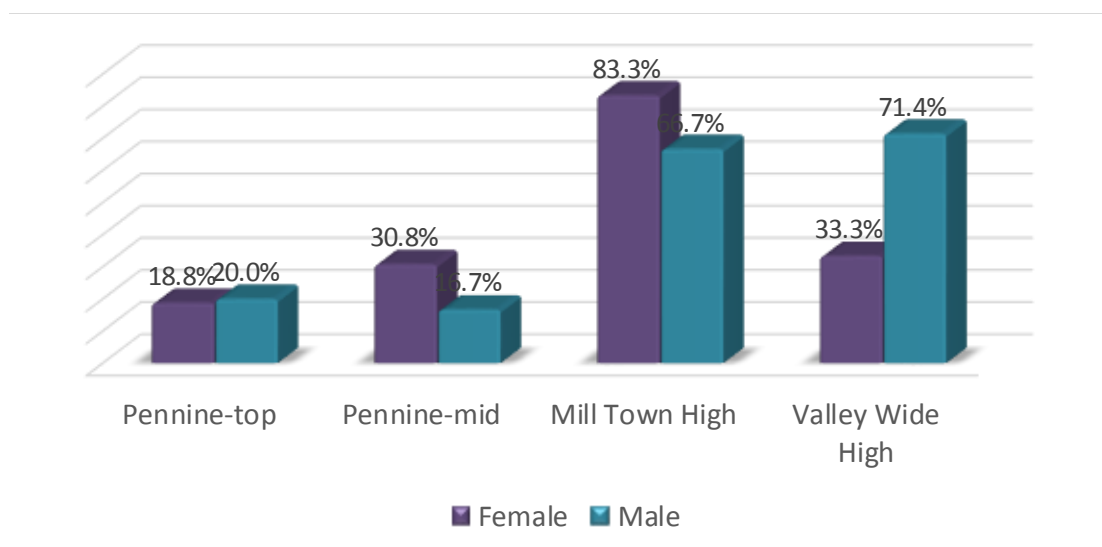


Figure 8.1: % of pupils with DAR in their presentation speech repertoire

Table 8.1 shows that although there were around the same number of tokens of *the* in HLs and LLs, there were 53 instances of DAR in the HLs, compared with just 18 in the LLs, suggesting that the feature is used stylistically and that DAR use increases when the identity load is high.

In the data, only four pupils, Solomon, Pancake, Taloola and Daniel S, scored below 90% for full realisation of the definite article and Figure 8.2

Table 8.1: Number of tokens of *the*

	HL	LL
<i>the</i> (realised)	2071	2376
DAR	53	18
Total	2124	2394
Percentage	2.50%	0.75%

shows that all of them shifted towards realising it (rather than dropping or glottalising it) more consistently during LLs. All of these pupils are from the working-class schools and three of them are from Mill Town High. In order to investigate the qualitative issues around the use of DAR, Pancake's data will be examined.

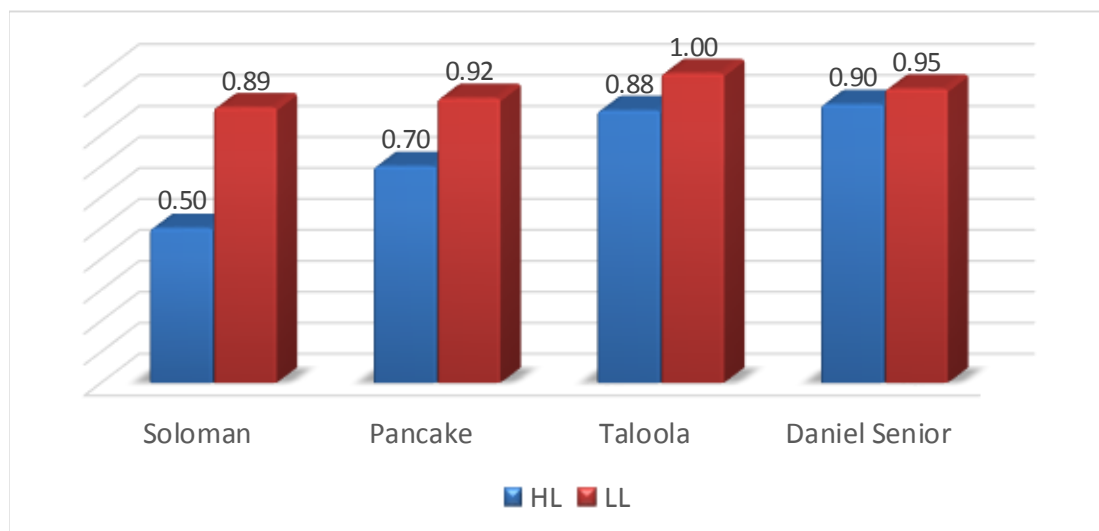


Figure 8.2: Definite article realisation for pupils scoring 0.90 or below on HLs

Her instances of DAR in HLs and LLs are as follows:

1. then we went^{x0} on t <dar> pier for a bit (HL)
2. we'll just like¹ · go t <dar> shop or someth0ing (HL)
3. start⁰ed walking up <dar> beach (HL)
4. my dad said . o if you close your eyes on top o <dar> um · pepsi max (HL)
5. he'll th⁰row me off <dar> top (HL)
6. I can [inaudible] all <dar> time (HL)
7. because· like¹ one of <dar> best nights ever (HL)
8. h^{z0}e's gonna keep crashing me in <dar> boat (HL)
9. h^{z0}e's one of <dar> juniors (HL)
10. they want^{x1}ed to go on <dar> nemesis (HL)
11. I wanna be in <dar> navy · yeah . I wanna be in <dar> navy (HL)
12. I h^{x0}it my h^{x0}ead on <dar> wall (HL)
13. a drunk guy tryna get on <dar> bus (LL)
14. you do know I'm going to sea cadets · <dar> charit¹y appeal (LL)

As well as DAR, tokens 1 and 2 in this list involve a contraction of the preposition *to* (*onto the pier*; *go to the shop*) to a vowelless form, articulated as [ɒn tʔ pi:ʔ] and [gɔ: tʔ ʃɒp]. Tokens 1 through to 12 were uttered during HLs and only numbers 13 and 14 were uttered during LLs, but in both of the LL instances there are reasons to believe that Pancake had reverted back into her own voice rather than playing a role. Token 13 occurred when Pancake was roleplaying an alcohol counsellor, as shown below:

right . I'm pancake and . I'm . to bring alcoh^{x1}ol awareness because . it's very bad for you . effects of alcoh^{x1}ol . could be . death¹ . cos . you're drinking too much . and . it's . very . bad for you because . it can . it can . like¹ . damage you or ruin your life . and then . <own voice> I – . when I was¹ younger . two years ago . I . was¹ . on h^{x1}oliday with⁰ my cousin . and . there were a drunk guy tryna get on <dar> bus . and start⁰ed fight⁰ing wi' the bus driver and it was¹ very scary cos^{<f0>} h^{z0}e was¹ drunk . I know it were well bad . and then . there's . vodka . whisky . wine . and . do n't drink alcoh^{x1}ol un – . or . drink . not that much . because . it's very bad for you

During the transcription process I marked the fact that Pancake appeared to have shifted into her own voice (showed by the red superscript font). From the shift, the presentation becomes an anecdote from a holiday during which she had a vivid encounter with a drunken man. During this part of her presentation she uses many informal, low-prestige features including DAR, the contraction of *trying* to into *tryna*, ellipsis of Θ (at the end of *with*), contracted *because*, *were-for-was* and *well* as an intensifier. So although this instance of DAR was made during LLs, it was made when Pancake had a high identity load invested in the voice.

The second instance of DAR was when she was making a charity appeal but, again, it could be argued that she maintains her own identity load in the voice.

um . I am . doing . about . charit^ly appeal . as . this is pancake and . you do know I'm going to sea cadets and <dar> charit^ly appeal I would do is the royal brit^lish legion . and . the r n l i . life boats and that^{<ge>} . and . do stuff for um . the navy . cos^{<f0>} . I'm really interested in stuff like that and I want to^{<f1>} h^{x1}elp . um . it's very good for like^l . people wh^{x1}o . need the h^{x1}elp . w – and charit^ly appeals are good for animals because^{<f1>} . if you're helping animals you're h^{x1}elping to – . if you h^{z1}e – . ping them^{<f1>} save their lives

In this presentation she makes an appeal for money for the Sea Cadets, a group with which she affiliates and which she mentioned during three other presentations (*my hobbies, my friends* and *my ambitions*). The voice used by Pancake at the beginning of this presentation appears to be her own because she asks a rhetorical question aimed at her friends which contains personal information about her that they would know (*you do know I'm going to sea cadets?*). This is immediately followed by DAR. The rest of the presentation also appears to have a high identity investment because the sentiments she expresses are very personal. But she only reduces the definite article on the first occasion. In fact, she realised it as /θə/ three times in the same presentation. It is difficult to say why DAR occurred where it did but it could be argued that it was at a time when her identity load was at its highest, coming as it does immediately after she gives personal information which is an important part of her identity (being a sea cadet) and directs a question to her friends.

In contrast to this, when Pancake made a presentation as a fashion designer introducing the new school uniform, she appears to have style-shifted into a more formal style. Early in the presentation I noted that she had crossed into a ‘mock posh’ voice, albeit momentarily (shown in red font and italics), and over the following four lines she realised the definite article as /θə/ on five occasions, as shown below.

<c mock posh> *STOP KILLING IT · NO::: · UM: · the* boys · h^{z1}ave to wear · they
h^{z0}ave *the* choice for wearing · sh::: – · pants or shorts · shorts for *the* summer
pants for *the* wint^{x1}er · um · they all wear · they all wear · black blazer · red
jumper · and · green t shirt · um *the* girls h^{z0}ave to wear

This gave the presentation a much more formal tone and shows that Pancake is able to style-shift into a formal voice when she is free of the identity constraints inherent in more personal and intimate topics. Her use of DAR, then, correlates with a high identity load on the voice.

8.2 *Were-for-was*

Figure 8.3 shows that the pattern of pupils with *were-for-was* in their presentation speech repertoire is similar to that of DAR, although there was more variation between groups. More girls than boys had the feature in their repertoire across all groups. Although there were fewer tokens of (standard and nonstandard) *was* than definite articles in the corpus, there was a higher percentage of the nonstandard form, giving more opportunity for analysis.

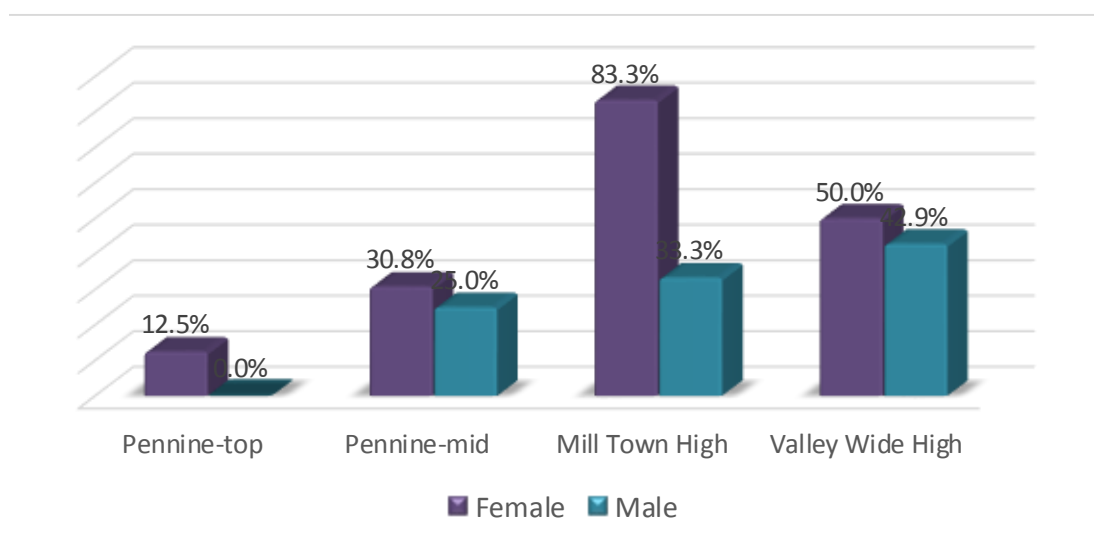


Figure 8.3: % of pupils who have *were-for-was* in the presentation speech repertoire

Table 8.2 shows that nearly 11% of *was* tokens were realised as *were-for-was* during HLs compared to 6.6% during LLs, suggesting that this variable is also subject to style-shifting depending on identity load.

Table 8.2: Number of tokens of *was*

	HL	LL
<i>was</i>	1030	340
<i>were-for-was</i>	125	24
Total	1155	364
Percentage	10.80%	6.60%

Twenty-one pupils scored 0.90 or less for *was*-realisation, shown in Table 8.3, and all except two are from the working-class schools. No pupils from the Pennine-top scored below 0.90 and of the four pupils scoring highly for DAR, three of them, Pancake, Taloola and Solomon, also appear in this table. It is interesting that most of the group is made up of females, including six of the bottom eight.

Table 8.3: HL *was* realisations below 0.90

Pupil	Score
Vanessa	0.23
Isabella	0.30
Roger	0.38
Isabella S	0.45
Pancake	0.58
Gina S	0.62
Hanna	0.78
Albert	0.80
Freya S	0.80
Taloola	0.82
Minnie	0.82
Benny	0.83
Sunny	0.88
Wilson	0.89

When social indices results for these nine pupils were compared to the other pupils, Table 8.4 shows that these nine pupils came from less pro-educational homes and were less aspirational. However, their group were no more likely to

be more deeply embedded in their communities than other pupils. Since this feature is felt to be a strong regional marker, the pupils who use it most could be expected to be those who are the most deeply embedded in their communities and it is difficult to say why this is not the case. Scores for *friendship group culture* and *attitude to school* are no different between pupils scoring above or below 0.90 on the *was*-realisation index. Pupils on the bottom half of the *was*-realisation scale might be expected to score lower than those above it simply because they might be less motivated to engage with school for reasons discussed in Chapter 2. The fact that this isn't the case reinforces the fact that attitudes can't be accurately inferred by the use of speech features.

Table 8.4: Average scores for pupils scoring over and under 0.90 for *was* realisation on social indices

	<i>Home culture</i>	<i>Comm embedd</i>	<i>Friendship culture</i>	<i>Att to School</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
Over 0.90	0.70	0.54	0.72	0.55	0.75
Under 0.90	0.58	0.55	0.71	0.50	0.66

One of the most interesting findings in regard to standard and nonstandard *was*-realisation was given by Harriet, a Valley Wide High pupil from a solidly working-class background. She gave two presentations on the same topic – her best holiday – but whereas the first presentation contained only standard-*was*, the second presentation contained only *were-for-was*. Analysis of both presentations gives an insight into why this difference occurred. The first time Harriet spoke on the topic, this is what she said:

my: . best h^{x1}oliday · my best h^{x1}oliday **was**¹ possibly the one where I – I um
 got two I th¹ink · one where I went to egypt · and . that one I **was**¹ about · twelve
 . and I went · no actually . eleven . twelve · ten eleven twelve I do n't really
 know . um · but⁰ I went to egypt · and I went wi' my friend^{<f1>} and she **was**¹

eight¹een · but⁰ I went wi' my mum and dad and their family · and we're like¹ a close family so · we used to be a close family we do n't really see 'em^{<f0>} any more

It seems that after giving this presentation Harriet remembered a much better anecdote about being on holiday so when she gave her next presentation, she chose to talk on the same topic. In this second presentation, she talked about a very exciting experience when she swam with dolphins. The content of this second talk is much more intimate and her delivery was much more passionate, as shown from this extract:

we went to this dolphin we were riding wi' dolphins and · mine called · ste and mia · maria · maria · and my friend^{<f1>} abi's were^{<was0>} called steve · and she kept calling me a lesbian cos^{<f0>} this dolphin kissed me it were^{<was0>} – I were^{<was0>} kissing this dolphin and every – she kept calling me a lesbian · dolphin were^{<was0>} called maria and it were^{<was0>} a girl · anyway · the dolphin as it were^{<was0>} swimming back she blew this whistle and as it were^{<was0>} swimming back · it whacked my leg and I got a dead leg

In contrast to the first presentation, Harriet doesn't use standard-*was* at all during this story but uses the nonstandard form, *were*, on seven occasions. The heightened excitement during this presentation is evident from the content of the story. In the second, more passionate extract, Harriet names her friend, Abi, whereas in the first extract, the 'friend' remains nameless and is considerably older than Harriet. The first extract is almost entirely without dynamic verbs, giving it a very static tone. In contrast, the second extract has several action verbs, *calling*, *kissing*, *swimming*, *blew* and *whacked*, giving it a much more vibrant tone than the first. So why would Harriet use

only standard-*was* in the first extract and only *were-for-was* in the second? I would argue that when Harriet becomes excited during the telling of the second story which is more personal and emotionally engaging, she invests more of herself in the voice and *were-for-was* is one of the features that comes to the fore at this time. Similarly, when talking about her friends, Harriet told the following story:

anyway speaking of football · my friend^{<f1>} were^{<was0>} at my h^{x0}ouse · my friend^{<f1>} my friend^{<f1>} were^{<was0>} at my h^{x0}ouse the oth⁰er day · not friend^{<f1>} · joe were^{<was0>} at my h^{x0}ouse · joe's my boyfriend by the way · joe were^{<was0>} at my h^{x0}ouse the oth⁰er day and h^{z0}e were^{<was0>} watching football and I were^{<was0>} sat^{<nsg5>} on my laptop^{<*>} · h^{z0}e was¹ like¹ [mock wimpy tones] yeah I'm ignoring you because^{<f1>} um you're on your laptop and h^{z0}e were^{<was0>} n't ignoring · because^{<f1>} I were^{<was0>} on laptop h^{z0}e were^{<was0>} ignoring cos^{<f0>} football were^{<was0>} on · h^{z0}e were^{<was0>} talking to my dad · all the time · all the way th¹rough the football and h^{z0}e's pulled me off my dad · and I'm like¹ · why do n't you talk to me · why do you talk to my dad all the time and it really annoys me · and I can breath¹e now

This extract was also delivered in a very excited tone, as evidenced by her final comment about being able to breathe now (she had become breathless by telling the tale in an excited manner). The content of this story is highly charged for Harriet because it represents the moment when her new boyfriend, Joe, begins to bond with her dad. During this speech, Harriet uses *were-for-was* eleven times whilst only using standard-*was* once. Again, the speech style here seems unguarded and spontaneous and, therefore, will have a high element of Harriet's own identity invested in it and this appears to trigger the use of the localised variant.

There were similar instances of unguarded speech resulting in *were-for-was* during Vanessa's presentations. During one amusing presentation Vanessa described how she went on holiday when she was twelve years old. Half way through the presentation she told a story about when she was trying to learn to swim, as shown below:

one day I went to jump in a h^{x1}oop • and I nearly drowned but then • cos^{<f0>} I
h^{z0}ad my armbands on they floated me back up • and um O NO I'm on about^{<inf>}
when I were^{<was0>} nine not twelve • [laughs] • when I first learnt h^{x0}ow to swim
• [laughs] • no I were^{<was0>} eight • and yeah^{<dm>} so I'm gonna^{<f0>} go now yeah

During the telling of this story, Vanessa suddenly becomes aware that twelve is quite old to be learning to swim and to be wearing armbands. From the shouted *O NO* she begins to backtrack and lowers her age to one she thinks is more appropriate to learning to swim, first nine and then eight. During this time Vanessa twice uses *were-for-was* and the speech here is very unguarded because she is focused on amending her age and redeeming herself.

In fact, Vanessa rarely used standard-*was* during HLs (3 occasions out of 13) but on one of the occasions that she does use it, it appears to be under the influence of Wendy. When talking about her friends, which included Vanessa, Wendy said the following:

it was¹ very nice ... there was lots of us • it went wi' fifteen minutes [inaudible]
. and then • it was¹ a very good day • and . and • she h^{z0}ad a . h^{x1}appy birth¹day

Unlike Vanessa, Wendy almost always used standard-*was* (including, in this extract, when *were* could be deemed standard – *there were lots...*). In the final seconds of the presentation, she uses standard-*was* three times and Vanessa immediately begins her next presentation. Inspired by Wendy, Vanessa continues to describe the party, beginning her presentation with the following:

as wendy said it **was**¹ very good • and we watched some films

Vanessa's utterance here is very similar to one made moments earlier by Wendy (*it was a very good day*) and it seems probable that Vanessa has used the standard form under the influence of Wendy and this supports Bakhtin's description of us filling our speech with other people's words (see 3.3.1).

DAR and *were-for-was* have clear associations with northern English working-class dialects and, as such, the indexical meanings embedded in them are relatively straightforward. But at other times the use of particular lexico-grammatical features was used to signal affiliations and allegiances to friendship groups and/or to index particular attitudinal stances and these offer insights into the presentation of different types of identities.

8.3 Dossing out

One of the more interesting features, which was unique to the Mill Town High pupils, was the term *doss* or *dossing out*:

- we'll just like¹ . doss out or someth⁰ing (Pancake)
- I like going to the park and . dossing out (Rose)
- um I like . [inaudible] . dossing with⁰ my mates (Rose)

- when I doss out at the park · I get prett⁰y bored because there's noth¹ing to do (Taloola)
- my h¹obbies are · basically · dossing out with⁰ my friends (Vince)
- dossing out (hobby listed by Solomon)

I discussed this term with the pupils after the elicitation and all of them understood what it meant, which was to hang around the streets aimlessly. It is revealing that the pupils from this community have developed a word specifically to refer to the act of hanging around the streets and this supports the findings of Willis, Cheshire, Eckert, Moore and O'Donnell and Sharpe (see 2.3) who found that one of the traits of low-aspirational working-class groups is that they tend to shun adult-oriented activities and are, instead, peer-group focused. This leaves them with limited options in terms of the geographical space they can occupy and often results in such aimless wandering. The term has a similar meaning to the term *hanging out* (a term also used by Preece to define 'laddishness', see 2.3), used by Valley Wide High nonconformist pupils, Albert and Daniel, who also describe roaming around aimlessly with their friends (see 9.3). Pupils from Mill Town High took part in the fewest after-school clubs, supporting the view that they are less inclined to engage in adult-oriented activities.

Given its specific meaning, it isn't surprising that this word was only used during HLs and seen in identity terms, the use of *doss* is part of a construction of an in-group identity where hanging around aimlessly is a shared behaviour.

8.4 Intensifiers: *well* and *proper*

Only eight pupils used the intensifiers *well* and *proper* more than twice; Declan, Daniel S, Chris, Costineto S, Harriet S, Pancake, Vanessa and Gina S. There was a social class

aspect to this feature with seven of these pupils were from the working-class schools and only Chris coming from Pennine High. As discussed in 6.3, although Chris comes from a middle-class home, he did not share the pro-school attitudes of his peer group and was thought to be rebelling against the authority of the school. Of the remaining pupils Declan, Costineto S, Vanessa and Gina S had scores on *attitude to school* index which were between 0.10 and 0.20 lower than their group average and all showed signs of being disaffected during the course of the study. Daniel S also frequently performed the identity of a disaffected pupil (see 9.3). Harriet S and Pancake, however, both had positive attitudes to school and their use of the features go against my hypothesis that the features are associated with disaffected, working-class cultures.

Table 8.5 shows that when the use of these intensifiers is compared to the use of the more standard intensifiers, *really* and *very*, a gender split is evident with all the boys using more nonstandard intensifiers and all the girls using more standard ones. It is interesting that no boys at Mill Town High used *well* or *proper* more than twice and this could be to do with their age. It also seems that use of this feature is much more prevalent in Year 9 pupils than Year 8. Of the eight pupils featured in Table 8.5, six of them were in Year 9 with only two, Pancake and Vanessa, being in Year 8. None of the Valley Wide High pupils from the first year of the study is in the list so it is possible that these features connote with a specific type of older pupil identity. This would fit in with Moore's (2004: 383) study where she found that the identity of the 'Townie', a street-smart, nonconformist groups of girls, was only evident in Year 9 and that Year 8 pupils were not thought to be old enough to belong to this group. The Townies were found to have distinct social and linguistic practices which indexed membership of their group and it is possible that the increased use of the nonstandard intensifiers by the Year 9 pupils in this study fulfils and similar linguistic function. Had I been successful

in repeating the study with the Mill Town High boys in Year 9, I would have been in a position to explore this.

Table 8.5: % standard intensifier realisation for pupils using more than two instances of nonstandard intensifier

Pupil	HLs	LLs
Declan	0%	
Daniel S	17%	50%
Chris	30%	
Costineto S	33%	
Harriet S	74%	67%
Pancake	76%	91%
Vanessa	80%	100%
Gina S	88%	76%

The two pupils who used the feature the most were both Valley Wide High pupils, Daniel S and Declan, and analysis of their presentations shows that the features are used in dense bursts which correlate with the performance of a similar type of disaffected identities found by Moore (2004) which are either anti-school or anti-social in nature.

The first example comes from Daniel S:

this is danny · um · um . well my least favourite subject · is r e because it's **proper** boring · you do noth⁰ing in that lesson it's **proper** boring · **proper** boring and I do n't like it · um . we sit there learn about jesus · and we do noth⁰ing · and it's **well** annoying · it's **well** annoying . I h¹ate it . it's **proper** boring · I do n't like it . it annoys me · and I h¹ate it . it's **proper** boring

This was the entirety of Daniel's presentation, making it much shorter than the average presentation length. The presentation is heavily repetitive and he doesn't appear to have

done any planning prior to making it. Daniel had been asked to talk about his favourite subject but chose instead to talk about his least favourite.

Given the discussion in 2.2 about the narrowing of the NC and the failure of the education system to provide pupils with the type of education suitable for them, I would argue that the behaviour of Daniel could be a response to the environment in which he finds himself and there were occasions when he constructed the identity of a contented pupil enjoying school. By looking at his comments when he did talk about his favourite lesson, Design Technology, it is clear that he is passionate and enthusiastic about it:

- the best thing about it is that you ... make something exciting like a key ring or something
- [at the moment I'm] making a book end [using] a hammer, tenner saw, a band saw and other things like that
- [a] fun lesson [is] where you get to use all ^{dar} tools and make th¹ings
- some of the th⁰ings that I've learn is h^{x0}ow to make a . jewellery box ... h^{x1}ow to sand th⁰ings down and [make] joints used to make a good box
- we made a clock the oth⁰er week as well and it were^{was0} very nice – it's up on my wall at the minute ticking away, telling me the time

The final comment in particular shows the pride Daniel feels having produced a clock in his Design Technology lessons and in discussions with him and with his DT teacher, it seems that he doesn't misbehave or get in trouble in these classes. His ambitions are to join the army or to be a mechanic, neither of which will require him to speak SE. Seen from this perspective, I would argue that Daniel's behavioural problems are likely to stem from the fact that he is being pushed through an education system designed to

produce middle-class adults and which affords little respect to the skills Daniel obviously has.

The presentation in which Declan used *proper* most densely suggests that it is linked to the performance of an antisocial identity. When asked to describe the best party he'd ever been to, this was his response:

the best party · I've ever been to · was when I was fourteen · and it was · in x
· and all my friends were there there was like about · fifty people there · some
of 'em were like · **proper** fit · and there was loads of booze there · and um · I
just got · made it so memorable · cos · I just got · drunk out my head · me and
my mates had a **proper** good laugh · and · when I woke up in the morning I dint
know where I were · and I was looking round and there were some people there
I dint know · I had – · I saw loads of people from my school inside this girls
house at like¹ half six in the morning · and I dint even know who they were ·
hardly · and they were all telling me I was **proper** bad at the night · and I just –
· and then this girl · she fell through a rabbit hutch · and it **proper** just made
me laugh · and all the rabbits got out · and it just made me laugh

At a discourse level, the fact that Declan took the opportunity to present such a wild identity suggests a willingness to challenge the authority of the school because his references to underage drinking, his sexist attitudes to girls and his admission of being 'bad' are all inappropriate in the context of a classroom presentation³⁷. However, it is

³⁷ It must be remembered that these were not authentic classroom presentations and it is possible that Declan would not have used such language in a more authentic setting with his regular English teacher. This is discussed in 10.4.1.

likely to be seen as daring and edgy by like-minded peers. Linguistically, the use of *proper* co-occurs with several other features:

- local features: *were-for-was*, /h/-dropping
- low-prestige features /t/-glottalling, preposition dropping
- informal features: *cos*, *'em*, *fit*, *mates*

This leads to the construction of an identity which combines a localness with anti-social behavioural traits.

Although Daniel S and Declan used these intensifiers nineteen times between them, all but one instance was made during HLs, suggesting that they are tied to a high identity load.

8.5 Taboo language

The use of taboo language during presentations was revealing because it perhaps represents the greatest deviation away from expected – and accepted – norms. It is always salient and is rarely accidental. As such, it represents a very deliberate choice about identity performance. Figure 8.4 shows the percentage of pupils from each group who used the sixty instances of taboo language marked in the corpus.

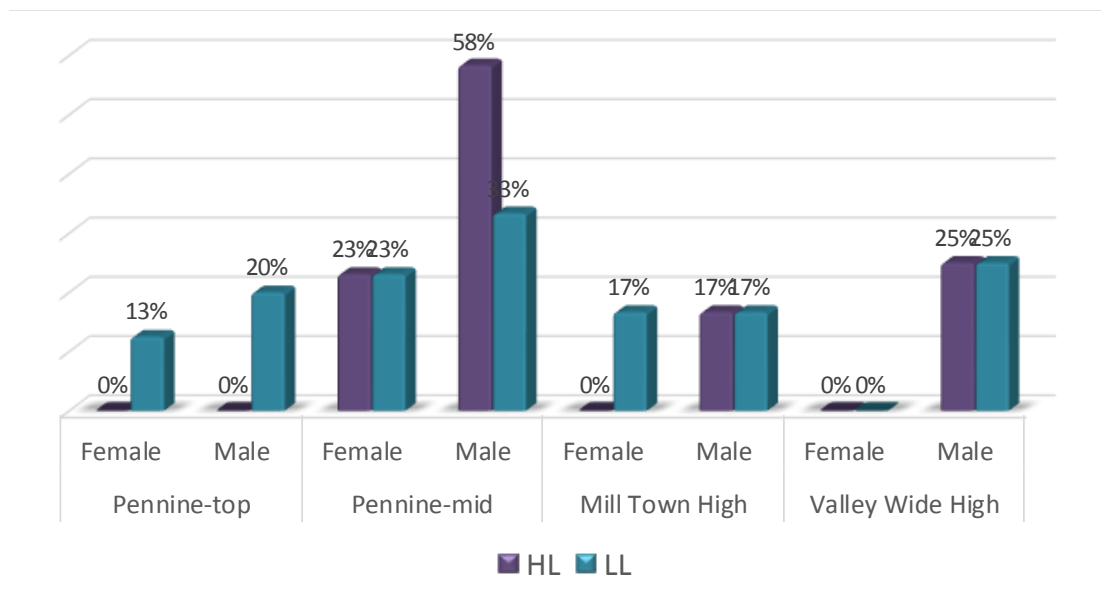


Figure 8.4: % of pupils using taboo language or raising inappropriate topics during presentations

The gender split here is very evident with no instances of taboo language being used by girls during HLs with the exception of Pennine-mid girls – but this data is skewed by Elma and this will be discussed below. The high usage of taboo language among Pennine-mid may be due to its liberal and free-spirited school culture, discussed in 5.2. The catchment area for this school is very bohemian with lots of art and high culture evident in the local town and this is reflected in parental occupations and in the hobbies and interests of pupils (see 6.1 and 6.2). However, during my time at the school, Ofsted served a ‘notice to improve’ behaviour in the school. The high incidence of taboo language at this school could, therefore, be a result of the tolerant culture. For the middle-class pupils in Pennine-top the temptation to misbehave in such a free-spirited culture is likely to be tempered by high aspiration but for some Pennine-mid pupils from families without their pro-educational home cultures, this freedom could lead to lower standards of appropriateness during the presentations.

In contrast to the liberal ethos at Pennine High, Mill Town High was a very well ordered school and appeared to have robust procedures for dealing with poor behaviour. For example, when I met the deputy head for the first time she was in a classroom where pupils who had misbehaved during the morning's lessons were serving break-time detentions.

Figure 8.5 shows how many instances of each type of taboo were marked. Many tokens were marked under two or more categories. For example, the comment under bodily functions *my bum's really itchy* was also marked as humorous because it appears to have been said in order to make the speaker's friends laugh.

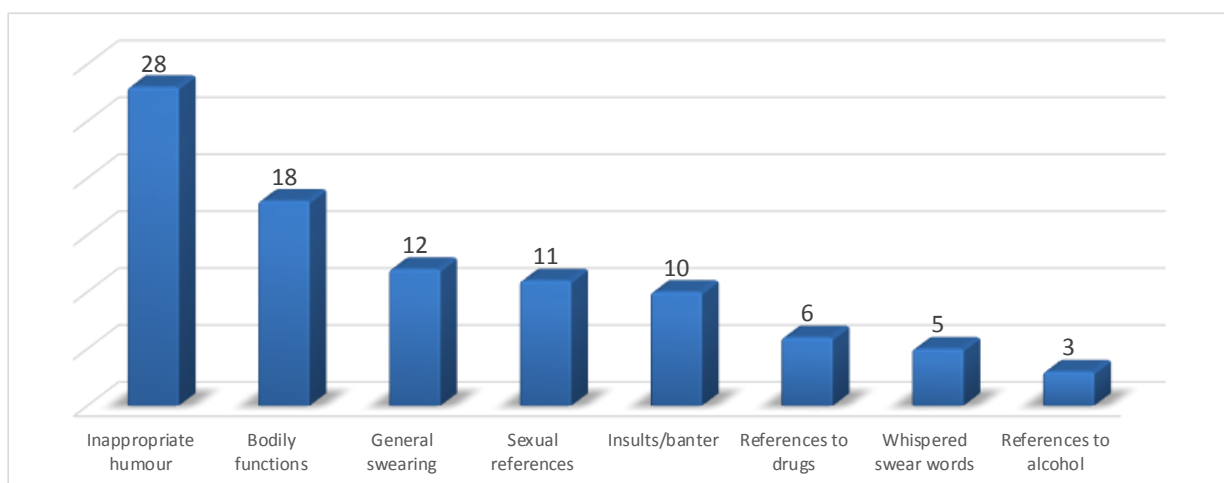


Figure 8.5: Taboo language broken down by category

Table 8.6 shows pupils using more than a single instance of taboo language and three things stand out from this data. Firstly, the high level of usage of taboo language by Pennine-mid, discussed above. Secondly, the use of such language isn't strongly conditioned by presentation type. And thirdly, only three pupils used such language more than twice and all three of them were Year 9

Table 8.6: Pupils with more than one token of taboo language

Pupil	HL	LL
Elma	9	4
Costineto S	3	4
Albert S	3	1
Fredna	2	
Barry	2	
Benny	2	
Jim		2
Lushuma	2	
Orinal		2

pupils. This is similar to the findings in regard to nonstandard intensifier use and could support the hypothesis that it is predominantly beyond Year 8 that pupils begin to overtly construct antiauthoritarian identities, as found by Moore (see 8.4). This would explain the absence of Mill Town High pupils in the list.

Elma used by far the highest number of taboo tokens and her nine tokens during HLs and four during LLs are shown below:

1. *you can smoke like . weed*
2. *good to do like · like better drugs*
3. *I like to go and smoke weed*
4. *it's the lesbian capital and everything*
5. *she has ginger pubes*
6. *a hairy · and a beard and a bumhole*
7. *they are farts*
8. *Fredna . she – x farts · [laughs]*
9. *x um pooed his pants*
10. *I still get shit . to this day*
11. *blue jumper wanker*
12. *vodka . um · malibu . um · fucking . gin whisky*
13. *I just told you that . nob head*

This list covers a wide range of inappropriate topics from the use of drugs (1 to 3), inappropriate sexual references (4 and 5), body parts and bodily functions (6 to 9), general swearing (10), gratuitous swearing (11 and 12) and an insult (13). The cumulative effect of this was to show Elma as extremely nonconformist. In particular,

the references to drugs suggest that Elma is presenting herself as belonging to a friendship group that engages in reckless and illegal behaviour – although it isn't clear that this is actually the case. Table 8.6 shows Elma's scores on the social indices, compared to the averages for her group (Pennine-mid girls).

Table 8.7: Comparison between Elma and the rest of her group (Pennine-mid girls) on the social indices scores

	<i>Home culture</i>	<i>Comm embedd</i>	<i>Friendship culture</i>	<i>Att to School</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
Elma	0.90	0.44	0.33	0.48	0.71
Other Pennine-mid girls	0.75	0.59	0.77	0.58	0.73

She has a much more pro-school home culture than the average for her group, supporting the belief that she has a middle-class background (see 6.4). However, her score on the *friendship group* index is among the lowest of any pupil and her *attitude to school* is 0.11 lower than her group average. She was the only pupil in the study who agreed or strongly agreed that smoking and drinking were important to her and her friends. From this, it seems that Elma is in the process of rebelling against her parents and is embedding herself in a friendship group who engage in antisocial behaviour, as can be seen in her presentation on the topic, *around my area*:

um right · the place where I live · it's a small town it's · the lesbian capital of
 britain · um it's also · a breeding ground for **druggies** and x · and chillies and
lesbians · and that's why x likes it – and that's why · x likes it so much because
 it's full of **lesbians** · and **druggies** and **x has never tried · weed** . because um ·
she's too scared and she's like [high pitched voice] oh no tried **weed** and stuff ·
 and – o yeah Fredna . she – **x farts** · [laughs] · o for you – for young people to
 do around that – around that area where I live · um well · well . there's – **you**
can smoke like . weed · and um . you can . like · x want – um um **x wants a**

girlfriend because you know it's the lesbian capital and everything · x cos x is a lesbian · um · I take part in activities such as · smoking and drinking and going to parties · and I would be at [inaudible] · I would like to be able to um · like if there was like something · good to do like · like better drugs and stuff · like · speed · ket · m ket · y'know that sort of thing like · [bird squawking noise] · [screams] · um right

The yellow highlighted areas represent what I would consider inappropriate content. Here, Elma is performing the identity of a street-smart youth embedded in a hedonistic culture involving drink, drugs, partying and sexual awareness. Furthermore, she constructs the identity of a group member who is at the forefront of nonconformist and illegal activities: she is challenging her friend, Fredna, to go further than she appears prepared to go (*x has never tried weed . because um . she's too scared*). As with the taunting of Evan discussed in 7.3, Elma uses Fredna's real name at this time. When Elma talks about having something good to do, she lists *better drugs* before showing her knowledge of the drug scene by naming some specific drugs (*speed . ket . m ket*). In this presentation, Elma is pushing at the boundaries of acceptable classroom behaviour, as she does in other similar presentations about her friends. In fact, Elma and her friend, Fredna, were very difficult to manage in the sessions and at one point I withdrew them from the study and put them back in their classroom. It was only after a meeting with their teacher and assurances from them that they would conform to the requirements of the study that I allowed them to return.

It is not immediately obvious who Elma is primarily performing for in this presentation because her two friends are also embedded in this culture and so will be aware of the details she gives. She appears to be boasting about the excesses they engage in in order

to shock me and, perhaps, to see how far she can push her inappropriateness before she faces consequences for her actions. It seems that her discourse is designed to show her friends how daring she can be and shows that she is oriented towards the amusement of her friends above the authority of the school, a trait discussed previously in regard to disaffected working-class pupils (see 2.3).

All instances of taboo language by Elma were made when she was constructing this hedonistic, nonconformist youth identity and none was used when she talked about other aspects of her life, such as her family and childhood.

8.6 Like-DM

Like-DM emerged as an interesting variable during the transcription process when I noticed that it is used with striking frequency by some pupils in short bursts. The pattern of *like-DM* distribution shown in Figure 8.6 reveals that, like t-glottaling, it is particularly susceptible to style-shifting between HLs and LLs: all groups use the feature more heavily during HLs. There are no differences in use between the schools or groups although girls use the feature more frequently than boys.

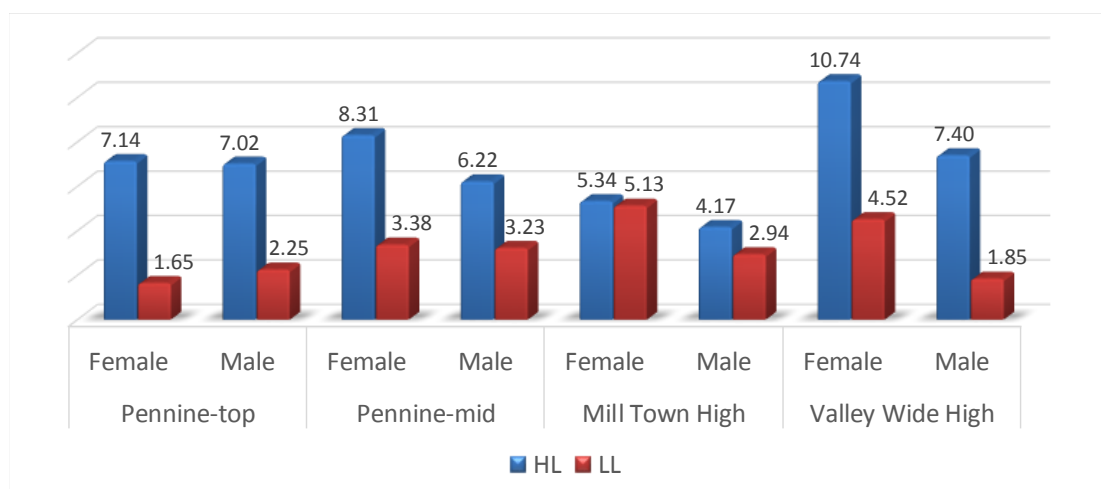


Figure 8.6: Tokens of *Like-DM* broken down by groups

Differences in use between HLs and LLs can be seen in two contrasting presentations by Fredna.

[LL] I've put it on wrong . ah well • I am fredna and I'm a police chief • um • you see • there's these young children at night • [laughs] on the street • smoking dope and drinking alcohol • and taking drugs . especially in [names local town] • known as hippy land • and lesbian capit¹al • x lives in x as well . yes . nobody cares • I have met this young • boy . who was smoking dope and he passed out • cos he was too high • o . and then the – and then • he was with his girlfriend . who was • no one [laughs] . I do n't know • he was with his girlfriend • drinking alcohol and he was • sick everywhere so he took her to the station and then her daddy came round • she went *mad* • we need to change the way we deal with young children • to be more calm • thank you . game over

[HL] [clears throat] • right • personal topic • fuck you • personal talk about anything that you want • whe:: • well . me and x we're like • we're like . really close and • we – we – we – • we go out and • we go out and we: . be cool and we get • we get in trouble • we get in trouble with the police . like • once we went onto this field called x and we got like • this . chicken lady came and chased us • and we was like argh • and she chased us . for like • ages . and • sh – she called the police y'know • um • sh – she has these chickens and x • threatened to burn down the chicken . thing • and so we ran away and we hid • hoping not to get caught • and we hid up in these bushes • and then th – and then that's the woods that um . we'd hid at • green teeth a guy called x • [names neighbouring high school] um • um um went and grassed us up and • we was

like argh • so then • chicken lady sh – the next day . we have n't been speaking
since • and I miss her dearly

Whilst Fredna doesn't use any token of *like*-DM during her LL, her HL is littered with them. One of the unusual features of Fredna's LL is that she doesn't shift out of her informal register and although she is adopting the role of the police chief, her presentation contains a great deal of personal information: she jokes with her friends, names the town and talks about the type of inappropriate subject matter used frequently by her and her friend, Elma. This might be expected to trigger a speech style with a high identity load and yet she doesn't use *like*-DM, even though she goes on to use it frequently during HLs. Taken together with the fact that the feature is so heavily susceptible to style-shifting between HLs and LLs, it could be that the feature is being used quite particularly to signal a generalised informal youth identity.

However, Freya, a Valley Wide High girl, uses the feature in quite a different way. In the example shown below, she gives a lengthy presentation about a holiday. The first half of the presentation doesn't have any instances of *like* in it but the feature is very heavily used in the second part.

hello my name is Freya and I'm going to talk about my best holiday . my best
holiday was set in Majorca . I've been there twice . once in two thousand and:::
six . and then again in two thousand and eight . I had a really fun- really good
fun . and I went- I went in Spain Majorca in Bouganvila . it was my first ever
holiday away from my mum cos my mum and dad've split up and I went with
my dad . and and I went with my dad . my dad's girlfriend Lindsey . Lacy . my
step sister . Lacy who is my step sister and my brother Connor . um we had

really really really really good fun . I I there was a massive swimming pool it was ice cold but . I didn't really care . um . second time I went . I went with my cousin as well . um I went with my cousin . who's name is Liam and um on the last day of his holiday he said . this time . he was gonna just . jump in the pool . Liam's only a year older than me . so um he must be more mature but he went and jumped in the swimming pool and [laughs] it's really funny because he jumped in the swimming pool and his DS was in his pocket . we played with our DSes like when we were out of the pool . if we were bored . and um . he he only had one DS . well obviously . and um . he broke it [laughs] and so there's this machine you could try and win a new one . and he was like . on that machine for like ages . his mum had a go . I had a go . like everyone had a go but like h- he couldn't fi- he couldn't get another one . but then he got like a couple of years later he got a DSR . but so it's reet . um . we played mini-golf and went and embarrassed my step-sister with her friends [laughs] it was really funny and like . i-I like I came . let's see . my aunty Nicola came- my aunty Nicola came first . my dad came second . my granddad came third . Lindsay came fourth . I came fifth . Connor came sixth . and Liam . came seventh because he can't like- given up because like he couldn't like really do it . which was kind of funny . he kept giving up . smacking the golfing thing and like he was getting like really mad but . you know . o just grow up you wimp you know . he was . such a wimp . he still is now but you know . I try not to tease him about it okay bye-bye and um I'm gonna go now bye-bye

This presentation went on for much longer than one minute and, on replaying the recording, I was reminded of why she continued to speak for so long. This presentation was made at the very end of a recording session and after the bell went, unbeknownst

to me, Freya continued because she wanted to increase her word count. The rest of the group were packing their things away ready for the lesson to end and I only noticed that Freya was still speaking some time later. For the last half of this presentation Freya did not have an audience and I suspect that the increased use of *like* was due to her feeling much more relaxed and at ease. During a friendship naming exercise³⁸, Freya wasn't named as a friend by anyone in the group and didn't name anyone in the group as being her good friend. She also appeared to be quite shy and to find the presence of the boys intimidating. It is interesting that during the second half of her speech she also used the phrase 'it's right' with the [ai] diphthong of *right* pronounced as a long monophthong [i:]. This feature tends to be used as a regional marker throughout northern English accents and usually marks a casual tone. She also laughs during this part of the presentation, again suggesting that she is relaxed. In this presentation, the loss of her audience appears to facilitate changes in the identity she presents but this wasn't away from a role-play identity and towards her authentic identity. In the first half of the presentation Freya's shyness meant that she was trying to suppress her natural identity and this exemplifies the complex and multifaceted considerations that go into the construction and presentation of identities.

Although *like*-DM is used more heavily during HLs, one of the speakers who used the feature the most, Rose, a Mill Town High pupil, used it even more during LLs than she did during HLs. Analysis of her presentations, however, show that even when she uses the feature heavily in LLs, she appears to maintain her own identity rather than shifting

³⁸ This was part of a pilot initiative which I didn't continue into the full study. It involved pupils saying who they were good friends with in the class and was inspired by Labov's New York Gangs study

into a role or a more formal style of speech. In the following presentation, Rose is playing the role of an alcohol counsellor:

h^{x1}e::y it's rose . again . [laughs] . talking bout . alcoh^{x1}ol awareness . um . um
· h^{x1}ow teenagers should deal with⁰ . alcoh^{x1}ol . teenager should really . deal
with⁰ alcoh^{x1}ol . like¹ . they should n't . well they . not . touching . they should
n't touch it . really . cos^{<f0>} like¹ they're under age . well most are . yeah . yeah
· you can . like¹ . sleep wi' someone . with⁰out knowing . car¹ n't you . um . and
· um . after you've like¹ . h^{z1}ad some alcoh^{x1}ol like¹ . you can become very ill .
and it's not good . and . um . well you shunt^{<mna>} like¹ . touch alcoh^{x1}ol . anyway
· like¹ you shunt^{<mna>} . like¹ get . too . wasted^{<inf>} . if your old enough to drink
· tatt¹y by::es^{<inf>} [laughs]

The use of *like*-DM in this presentation is amongst the densest usages in the corpus (and is one of the main reasons that her group have a higher usage during LLs than HLs). But analysis of her speech shows that she has not shifted into a formal style, as evidenced by the following features:

1. Informal opening and closing salutations: *he::y*, *tatty by::es*
2. Informal terms *cos* and *wasted*
3. Laughter
4. Elided /θ/ on *with*
5. Hyperdialectalises rhotic-/r/ in *can't*, realising it as /ka'nt/
6. Nonstandard negated auxiliary: *shunt*
7. Fronted /θ/ on *with* (3 times)

Taken together with *like-DM*, this cluster of features is arguably being used to construct a complex identity which involves informality (numbers 1 to 3), localness (4 to 6) and working-class youth (7). In fact Rose doesn't seem to have made much of an attempt to generate a formal speech style throughout her time on the study. One consequence of this is that her presentations have a high identity load embedded in them both during HLs and LLs. As a result, I would argue that even this example from the LL corpus lends weight to the hypothesis that *like-DM* is associated with a high identity load.

8.7 Summary of discussion

The analysis in this chapter has shown how complex and multifaceted considerations about linguistic choices and identity performance can be. A range of features, with varying meanings and degrees of salience, jostle with any number of social factors to condition the use of one variable over another. Identity load (measured by variations between HLs and LLs) appeared to be a factor for some variables, such as DAR, *were-for-was* and *like-DM*, but wasn't a factor in the use of taboo language. For the two intensifiers, *well* and *proper*, and the use of taboo language, the trigger for increases in usage appears to be different types of identities coming to the fore – specifically, nonconformist ones. In addition to identity issues, excitability (Harriet, *were-for-was*) and being freed up from shyness constraints (Freya, *like-DM*) were also factors conditioning the use of some variables. Despite these complexities, this analysis has revealed patterns which shed light on the construction and performance of identities – and the social backgrounds and attitudes which impact upon it.

DAR was used regularly only by a small number of pupils in the working-class schools. However, all speakers decreased their use of the feature when playing a role, suggesting that the feature is part of an authentic identity for those who have it in their repertoire.

Analysis of Pancake's use of DAR showed that its use for her was linked to the performance of an authentic identity, even during LLs. Analysis of *were-for-was* added a new dimension to the issue of identity load affecting the choice of variant used: both Harriet and Vanessa switch away from the formal, high-prestige variant under the influence of high excitement.

This discussion on taboo language began by showing differences between the group and genders. Boys were much more likely to use this language and pupils from Pennine-top were very unlikely to use it. But the speaker who used the most taboo language, the rebellious Elma, comes from a middle-class home. The extremely inappropriate content of her speech is absent from the working-class schools and I speculate that the liberal culture at Pennine High allows its pupils a greater degree of freedom in the topics which they feel free to use. Discipline at the working-class schools is more robustly maintained.

Like-DM emerged as one of the most interesting variables and was used in different ways by different speakers for different purposes. Fredna used *like-DM* very frequently when talking about the antisocial behaviour she engages in with her friends but, when she was discussing that same behaviour playing the role of a police chief, she didn't use it at all. Freya appeared to be suppressing her authentic identity due to her shyness but when her audience left and she was free to express herself, *like-DM* was one of the features she used with the greatest frequency. Rose maintained the use of *like-DM* as part of her defiant refusal to play the 'role-play' game. In each of the situations, the features served a different function.

CHAPTER 9: BEYOND THE SENTENCE

This is a chapter that I didn't anticipate at the outset of this thesis, but the construction of identities beyond the level of the sentence emerged as being particularly salient during the analysis. This is where attitudes, opinions and beliefs appear to be most clearly expressed. The chapter begins with quantitative analysis which shows how attitudes pattern onto the types of head teacher pupils construct. But a greater insight is found through the qualitative analysis of the presentations beyond the level of the sentence and this will be carried out by drawing on discourse analysis methodology.

The focus of this chapter will be the 'New Head' LL presentation task. Here, pupils were asked to imagine they were the new head teacher of their school addressing their first assembly and were telling pupils how the school would change under their leadership. Suggested topics for pupils to talk about were behaviour, reward and punishment systems, dress code and after-school clubs. When faced with this task, pupils had a range of options about how to construct and present a head teacher's identity: they could adopt the persona of a stern or lenient head; they could use humour or be serious; and they could aim their presentation at their friends, or at the 'teacher' figure in the room. For pupils with localised features, they also had decisions to make about whether to adopt formal, high-prestige features or to maintain their own localised speech variants. All of these decisions are potentially revealing.

The chapter begins with a discussion about the main approaches adopted by pupils during the 'New Head' presentations, including a brief discussion about two recurring themes running through many of the presentations, humour and sports. The main body of the chapter will focus on group dynamics and how this impacts on the content of the presentations. Three groups will be discussed: a group of Valley Wide High boys, a

group of Mill Town High boys and two Mill Town High girls. Analysis of the Valley Wide High group will show how in-group norms can stifle the construction and performance of a pro-school head teacher when the group culture is predominantly determined by disaffected pupils. The Mill Town High group will show how pupils can use subtle linguistic cues to hint at irony and mitigate the identity being performed. Finally, the presentations given by two Mill Town High girls will be compared to show how social outlooks (as evidenced by scores on the social indices) may be linked to the approaches adopted in these presentations.

9.1 Dominant approaches

Sixty-five pupils gave 'New Head' presentations and there were three dominant approaches. The most common type of presentation involved the construction of a head teacher who planned to make small improvements but who didn't make any outlandish claims, as shown in the opening of Indiana's presentation:

h^{x1}ello . welcome to the *new* h^{x1}igh school · I'm miss x · I'm miss x and I'm
· going⁰ to be showing¹ you · h^{x1}ow life is really going to^{<f1>} change after we
h^{z0}ave done a · serious changes to x h^{x1}igh · our dress wear is going to^{<f1>} be
smart · but not overly smart · we expect our children^{<f1>} to wear it with¹ pride

Another group of pupils made presentations in which the head teacher advocated the dismantling of school rules, as shown in this example from Albert:

there are no rules . and you are allowed to wear what⁰ever you want ... and um
you only have twenny^{<f0>} minutes for every lesson and then you can do

what⁰ever you want for the rest of it ... you can eat chocolate in class ... you can swear in class

A third group of pupils made presentations in which they said they would be introducing a more authoritarian rule over the school, as shown in Olive's presentation:

any um . violations . in uniform will be punished . simply and . h^{x1}ard . so um . people wh^{x1}o . disobey . and . disagree with¹ the rules will be punished

When responses to the main three styles are broken down by group, as shown in Figure 9.1, some interesting patterns begin to emerge.

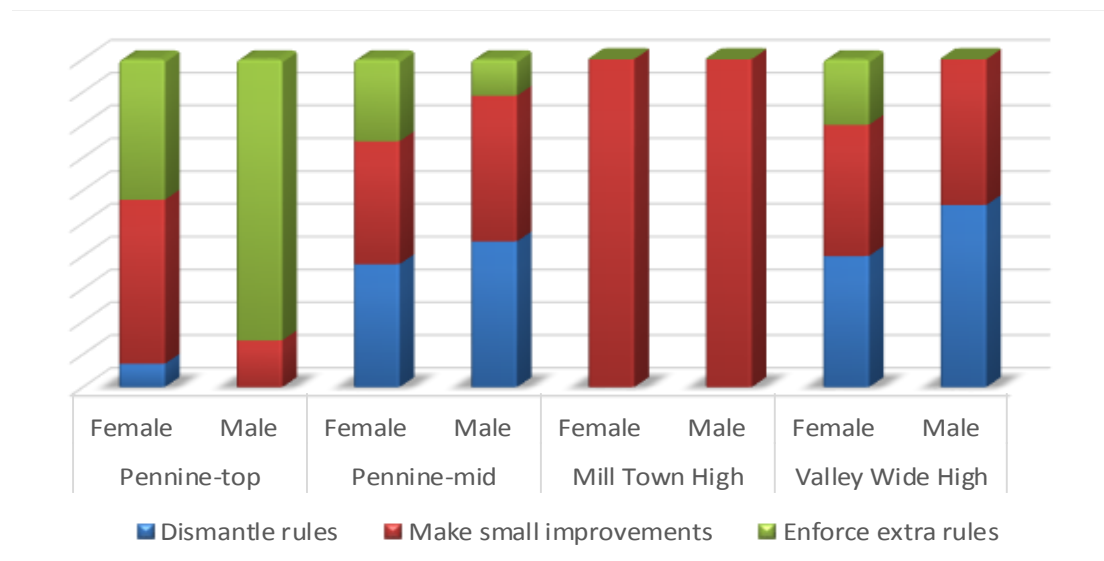


Figure 9.1: Share of pupils from each group making different types of 'New Head' presentations

From this it is clear that the Pennine-top pupils were much more likely to encourage a tightening of the rules with nearly half of all girls and over 80% of boys taking this line. The Pennine-top groups are largely made up of pupils who are investing in their education (see Chapter 6) and their inclination to tighten rules could be a response to behavioural problems which they may think disturb their learning – as discussed in

5.3.5, during my time at this school, Ofsted issued a ‘notice to improve’ specifically in regard to behaviour. The only person from Pennine-top to advocate the dismantling of the rules was Nora but, on closer examination, she focused exclusively on the scrapping of the school dress code in an attempt to allow greater freedom of expression.

In contrast to the Pennine-top group, far fewer pupils in the Pennine-mid group or at Valley Wide High chose to adopt this style of head teacher – and no pupils from Mill Town High did so at all. Seven pupils from the Pennine-mid and seven pupils from Valley Wide High opted to construct a head teacher intent on implementing an anarchic school regime. Mill Town High’s results are interesting here because all presentations were in the middle (small improvement) category; this will be discussed in 9.4 and 9.5.

Analysis of the social and linguistic profiles of the three dominant groups shows that the type of head teacher persona these pupils chose to adopt was a very good predictor of scores across all variables. Figure 9.2 shows average social indices scores for the three groups and Figure 9.3 shows their results on the realisation of the three phonetic variables.

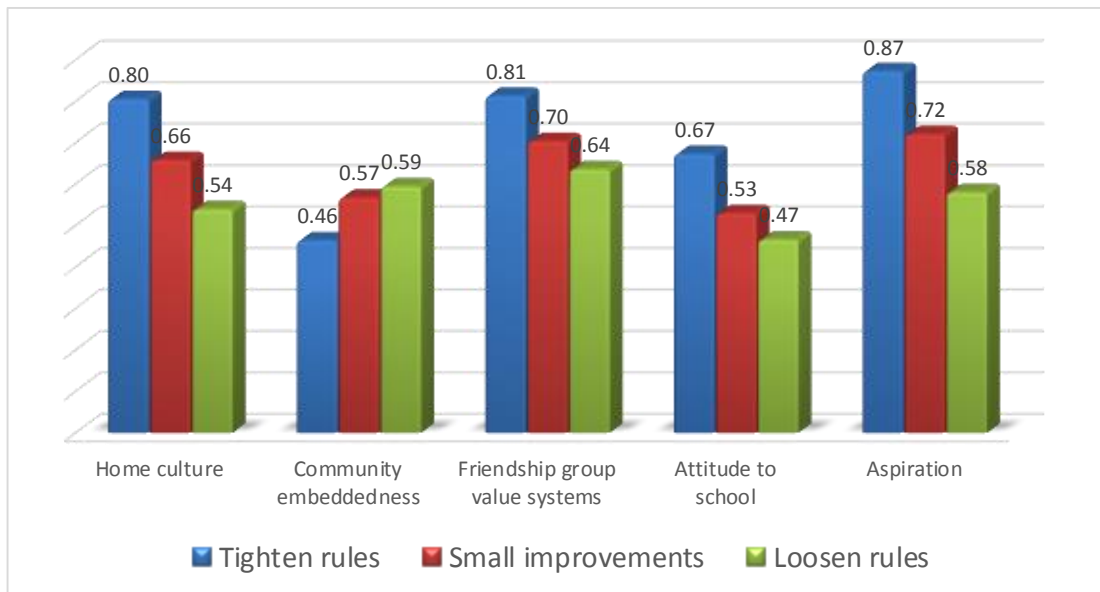


Figure 9.2: Average social indices score broken down by 'New Head' presentation type

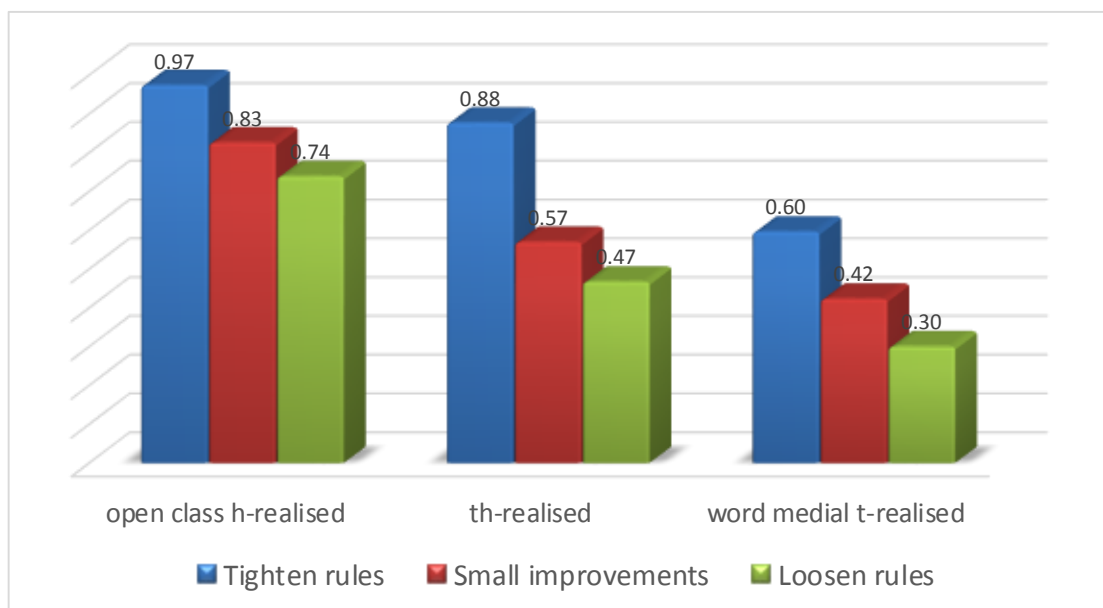


Figure 9.3: Phonetic variable realisation broken down by 'New Head' presentation type

The spread of results across these five social indices shows that pupils constructing an authoritarian head teacher identity score more highly across all pro-school indices whilst those taking on an anarchic head teacher role score more poorly. Those advocating small improvements fall between these two extremes.

The tight match between presentation type and social index scores is mirrored in results from the three phonetic variable scores. Pupils who advocated the tightening of rules almost exclusively realised their/h/s, they realised their /θ/s much more than the pupils who wanted to loosen rules and realised their /t/s twice as much. These results were mirrored across all other variables and show that the type of head teacher role chosen by pupils has proved to be a very good indicator of backgrounds, attitudes and speech features.

Before looking more closely at group dynamics, I will point out two recurring themes running through the presentations, the use of humour and references to sport, both of which have a strong gender imbalance. Figure 9.4 shows the percentage of pupils from each group who used humour during their presentation. For example, *everyone h^las to wear um a bin bag · as the new uniform* (Isabella S, Valley Wide High).

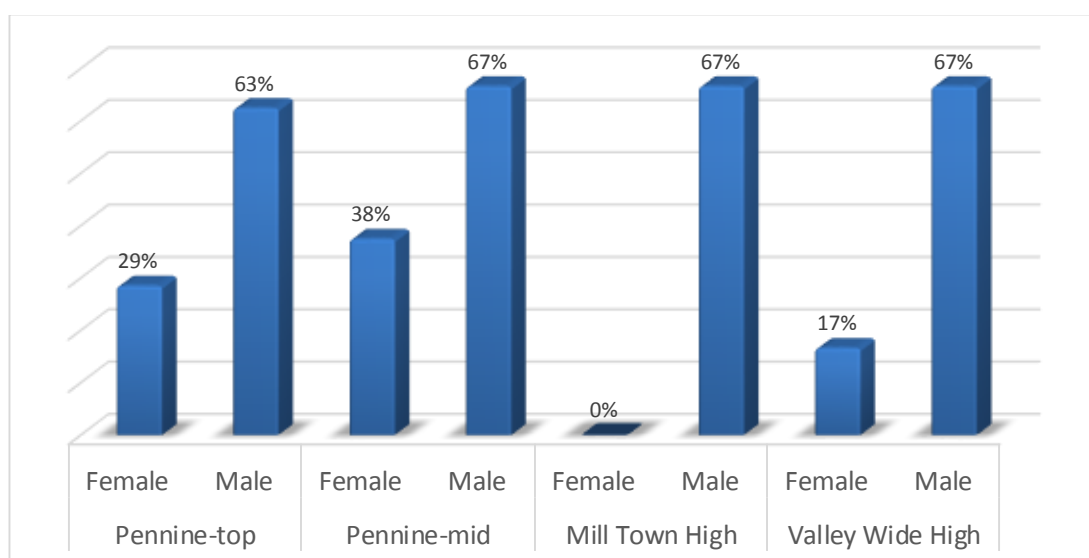


Figure 9.4: % of 'New Head' presentations using humour

Whilst the use of humour was evident across all groups except Mill Town High girls, it was much more prevalent in groups of boys, with around two thirds of boys using humour in all the boys' groups, twice as much as girls. The ability to make people laugh has been found to be an important male attribute (see 2.3). But the findings of this study do not show the kind of social class split which might have been expected given that previous studies tend to focus on the importance of humour among working-class boys: here, the Pennine-top boys were just as likely to use humour as those from other groups.

In addition to the recurrence of humour among the boys' presentations, references to sports were similarly frequent. This was prompted to some extent because part of the crib sheet asked pupils to comment on how they might change after-school clubs and references usually involved pupils listing sports as part of their plans for after-school clubs, for example, *school activities you've got football hockey cricket · um or um: · anything · [inaudible] or anything like that* (Solomon, Mill Town High)

Figure 9.5 shows that there was again a gender split with no girls outside Mill Town High speaking about sports at all during their presentation. In contrast, almost half of Valley Wide High boys talked about it. The references to sport occasionally shows a blind assumption that the wish to see an increase in the provision of sport would be shared by everyone; for example, Bradley comments that more football would mean *happier* pupils who were *more excited about coming to school*.

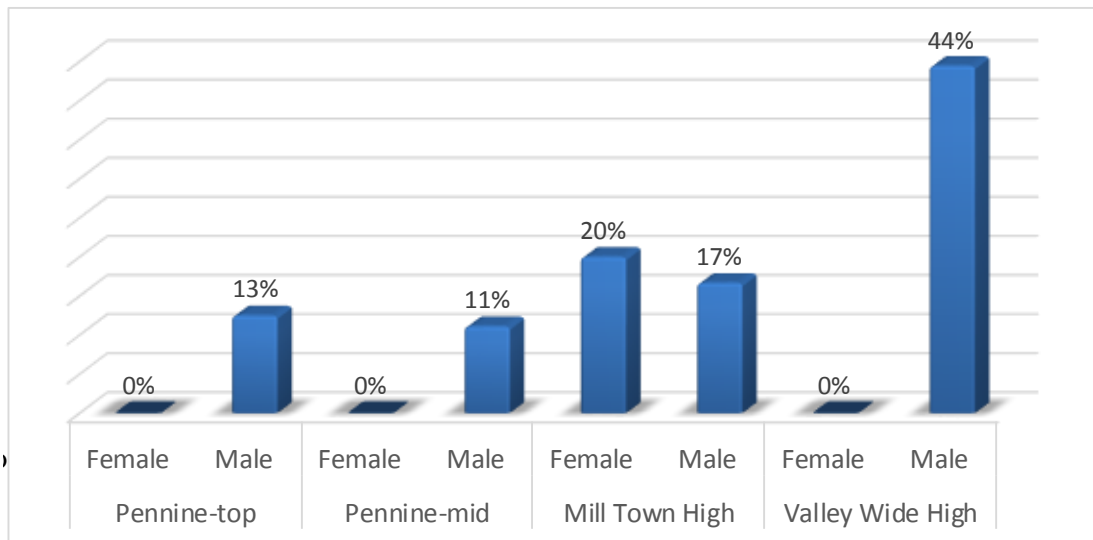


Figure 9.5: % of pupils who advocated more sports during their 'New Head' presentation

For the boys at the working-class schools, football is all-important, as evidenced in the narrow scope of interests and hobbies that boys listed (see 6.2.2), and Bradley's belief that it is a universal norm shows that his narrow cultural experiences shield him from exposure to wider cultural attitudes and interests. In fact, some boys from Pennine-top hated PE and made comments such as these from Eugene:

my worst subject is by far · p e . I · despise p e . p e . is just a lot⁰ of chavs ·
running around shout¹ing · football · football · and kicking each oth¹er

the only th¹ing about p e . is a lot of boisterous arrogant children^{<f1>} ... chavs
yes maybe ... so then they're all just shout¹ing round · being th¹inking they're
so cool^{<inf>} when they're not · and they're all they're all going to^{<f1>} work for me
in a factory when they're older

there's just too many large · fat oafs · playing rugby · against · the cleverer
people · it's just terrible

9.2 Discourse Analysis

In order to assess the impact of social and situational constraints pupils face as they make their presentations, I will draw on some of the techniques used in discourse analysis. Rogers (2011: 1) argues that these are particularly well-suited to educational contexts: educational situations are communicative events and discourse analysis is designed to explore communicative events; discourse studies provide a particular way of conceptualising interactions that is compatible educational research; and both discourse studies and educational research are socially committed paradigms that address problems through a range of theoretical perspectives.

At its most basic, discourse analysis seeks to answer the question ‘what’s going on here?’ in regard to a specific speech event (Ribeiro, 2006: 49). But on a practical level there are many different approaches within critical discourse analysis (Rogers, 2011: 10). Below, I will take a functional and practical approach by selecting a small number of methods from the CDA toolkit which, I believe, can facilitate an insightful investigation about the identities being constructed within the social and cultural constraints of the particular classrooms. These are ‘positioning’, ‘stance’, ‘footing’ and ‘voice’. The concept of ‘voice’ was discussed in 3.3 but ‘positioning’, ‘stance’ and ‘footing’ are more specifically associated with critical discourse analysis. There are some overlaps in the way these terms have been used by linguists so before carrying out the analysis I will describe them, the links between them and how I intend them to be understood.

Positioning theory posits that agency in communication is ‘bi-directional’; that is:

- ‘historical, sociocultural forces in the form of dominant discourses ... position speakers in their situated practices and construct who they are without their agentive involvement’ but;
- ‘speakers position themselves as constructive and interactive agents and choose the means by which they construct their identities vis-a-vis others as well as vis-a-vis dominant discourses’ (De Fina et al., 2006: 7).

Thus, the positioning theory is built on social constructionist foundations. It seeks to explore the mechanisms by which identities are constructed as speakers position themselves within the social constraints under which they have been culturalised.

When researchers talk about positioning, it is usually to identify insights into the strategic positions that speakers take up as they set out their identities (Ribeiro, 2006: 49). Speakers can position themselves as experts, leaders, messengers, listeners, learners or any other number of roles (Ribeiro, 2006), and each of these will influence the identities being presented and, in turn, the language used. Positioning theory may be particularly helpful for the analysis of adolescent speech because, as adolescents construct their identities, it allows them to:

constantly refin[e] the answer to the question of ‘who-am-I?’ that results incrementally in a sense of coherence, but one that is always open to reworking ... [allowing them] to rehearse different positions that can be taken towards their audiences and competing master narratives (Moissinac, 2007: 231)

Thus, by taking up different positions, adolescents are able to experiment with the identities they construct.

Stance refers to ‘how interlocutors position themselves with regard to each other, the form and content of an utterance, and ideologies and macrosocial identity categories’ (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015: 190). It can be better understood by looking at its use in context:

- a dominant stance (Ribeiro, 2006: 265)
- Natalie’s disciplinary stance (Gordon, 2007: 150)
- an oppositional stance (Guo, 2007: 191)
- an anti-establishment, anti-school stance (Coupland, 2007: 134)
- a more serious stance (Snell, 2013: 116)

Stance, I would argue, occurs under the influence of the positions that speakers take up. For example, someone taking up the position of a messenger might adopt a meek stance if they are submissive to their interlocutor and expect the message to be badly received, or they might take up an enthusiastic stance if they expect the message to be welcomed.

Goffman (1981: 128) defines ‘footing as’ ‘the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance’. Analysis of footing is particularly helpful when used to describe dynamic shifts made in the course of a communicative exchange. Changes in footing can be seen as the tactical shifts made by speakers as they negotiate their identities with interlocutors. Goffman (1981: 128) suggests that these shifts should be seen as a cline ranging from ‘gross changes in stance’ to ‘subtle shifts in tone’. In the example used regarding positioning and stance above, a speaker might shift their footing if the

message they are giving appears to be going better or worse than they expected: they might try to take more credit or they might pass the buck, for example.

Robeiro (2006: 49) distinguishes between positioning and footing by viewing positionings as ‘strategic interactional moves’ whereas changes in footing represent ‘shifts of alignment’. As such, ‘positioning influences the types of footings that unfold’ (Ribeiro, 2006: 73). Stance isn’t always used as a distinct concept by proponents of discourse analysis and can sometimes be used in similar context to both positioning and footing. For example, Robeiro (2006: 52) defines footing as ‘the stance that speakers and hearers take toward each other’ whereas Snell (2013), having used the term ‘positioning’ in the title of her paper, only uses the term ‘stance’ inside it.

I would argue that stance should have its own place in explaining what is going on in a communicative exchange, sitting between positioning and footing, and this can be seen most clearly by looking at the terms as metaphors taken from the sport of boxing. Positioning can be seen as the position a boxer might take up inside the ring. A strong or more skilful boxer will typically have the power to dominate the centre of the ring whereas a weaker opponent will be forced to circle the edges (where they will have to exert more valuable energy). Stance is the posture a boxer might take up at different points in a fight. Stances can be ‘set square’ to land hooks and body blows or one foot can be forward ready to launch straight right-hand punches; they can be aggressive or defensive. Stances can be upright or crouched and can signal confidence or weariness. As such, they will be linked to positioning. Footings can be seen as the quick-fire shifts in footwork designed to facilitate a flurry of punches or a retreat across the ring. As such, they can be used to bring about a change in stance. They reflect the most immediate and instinctive responses to the situation.

But human interactions are much more complex than a boxing ring and these concepts – in the context of classroom interactions – will involve a much more multidimensional set of motivating factors. For example, positions will be taken up in regard to how the individual sees themselves in relation to each of the other people in the room. This will influence the stances they adopt for their presentations and, as the talks unfold, speakers will adjust their footing based on the response they get from the others.

Below, the presentations of several groups will be explored through a discourse analysis perspective.

9.3 Valley Wide High

In this section, I will discuss the group made up of Albert, Daniel and Evan. Prior to discussing the discourse, profiles of the individuals will be given to show a divide between those who are broadly pro- and those who are broadly anti-school. Albert and Daniel (along with Costineto) were often in trouble at school and were part of a wider group of nonconformist boys. For example, Albert, the most extreme member of this group, was often withdrawn from lessons due to behavioural problems, he had a very poor attendance record and was ‘on report’ during our sessions (which means that I had to complete a comment card about his behaviour because of poor behaviour in other lessons). He missed one session because he was in ‘exclusion’ due to misbehaviour and, in Year 2 of the study, he missed another because he was absent. In the questionnaires, he agreed with the statements *In school I just want to have a laugh with my friends* and *Most teachers try to make your life hell*, he named *Rule breaking at school* as something that he and his friends thought was important and he disagreed with the statement *I’m well behaved in class*.

Neither Albert nor Daniel aspired to go to university and they named their ideal jobs as a fireman (Albert) and a skilled tradesman or joining the army (Daniel). Their only hobbies were football, xbox and ‘hanging out’. They both created identities in which hanging around the streets with other boys (with implicit or explicit hints of engaging in minor acts of anti-social behaviour) as evidenced by these quotes:

- at weekends like¹ . go on trips in a car . go cruising y’know . we kinda do some bad stuff [laughs] ... we do a lot of . um fun stuff and bad stuff (Albert)
- pulling wheelies doing the biggest skid seeing who can go fastest . all that sort of stuff it’s really good . also . me and my friends we like¹ . we like to h^{x1}anging ... h^{x1}anging out togeth⁰er . sometimes we’ll go x . town cent^{x0}re . um all that sort of stuff (Daniel)

When the average of the social indices scores for the three nonconformist boys were compared to the average scores for the other Valley Wide boys (Bradley, Christopher, Declan and Evan), some big differences are evident, as shown in Table 9.1. Albert, Daniel and Costineto’s scores on the *friendship group culture* index was 15 points lower than the other boys and their scores on the *attitude to school* and *aspiration* indices were both around 20 points lower (although the Valley Wide boys figures are being driven up by the aspirational outlier, Evan).

Table 9.1: Comparison of Valley Wide High boys constructing an authoritarian head teacher with those constructing an anarchic head teacher on pro-school social indices

Pupils	<i>Friendship culture</i>	<i>Attitude to School</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
Albert, Constineto, Daniel	0.63	0.45	0.58
Bradley, Christopher, Declan, Evan	0.78	0.64	0.78

It seems probable that when these three boys talked about dismantling the school rules as part of their ‘New Head’ presentations, the rules they were committed to rejecting would be the type of rules that brought them into conflict in their school life.

Albert’s first ‘New Head’ presentation was as follows:

h^{x1}ello my name is x I am the new h^{x1}eadmaster of x and um [Daniel tells Albert that he just used his real name] - well albert . and um I want yous all to pay good . I am . the new h^{x1}ead teacher of x I expect the best beh^{x1}aviour from all of you h^{x1}owever there are no rules . and you are allowed to wear what⁰ever you want and you can forget⁰ about the shine th⁰ing cos^{<f0>} to me that’s a load of jibber-jabber^{<inf>} ^{<*>} . and um . and um you only have twenny^{<f0>} minutes for every lesson and then you can do what⁰ever you want for the rest of it . and no - um . you can go h^{x0}ome at h^{x0}alf one and um . and . all you h^{z0}ave to bring in a pen and that’s it and we’ll provide you with the rest of the stuff . and um . you can eat chocolate in class you can eat⁰ in class you can drink in class you can swear in class^{<*>} you can . chew gum in class . you can do everyth⁰ing you want . and also . there’s a t v in class so you can chill^{<inf>} back and put what⁰ever you want on there . but⁰ um . make sure you do n’t disrespect me^{<*>} or else I’ll h^{z0}ave to punish you in any way

Albert’s opening utterance suggests that he is positioning himself as a conventional head teacher: his opening salutation, *hello*, is appropriately formal and the /h/ isn’t dropped on *hello* or *head* (although, relative to other boys in his group, Albert maintained a high level of /h/-realisation) and he says he will expect good behaviour. Also, when Daniel interrupts to tell him that he has used his own name, he doesn’t ‘slap

down' Daniel in order to assert his status at the top of the boys' hierarchy, as might be expected, but adjusts his footing to use his chosen name. This reaction reinforces the belief that Albert has positioned himself – and is 'thinking' – as a conventional head.

Early on in his presentation, Albert uses the plural form of *you* ('*yous*'), which was used very rarely in the corpus, appearing only six times (three of these were used by Valley Wide High boys: Albert, Bradley and Daniel) and this language isn't typical of a conventional head teacher. From the context, it isn't clear whether Albert is conscious of this usage or whether he is making a deliberate stylistic choice. Over the course of the study Albert showed himself to be among the most linguistically dextrous speakers from any of the schools, so this nonstandard usage could be being used to assert his own voice (and, therefore, identity) within the head teacher identity he is constructing.

However, after initially appearing to conform to the expectations around a head teacher by saying he expects *the best behaviour*, he signals a fundamental shift in position to say that *there are no rules*. What follows is the presentation of an anarchic head teacher identity, suggesting that his early utterances were ironic, designed to heighten the shift from conventional to unconventional.

After this shift, Albert uses many informal and nonstandard features: he glottalises his /t/, fronts his /θ/, uses the informal contraction *cos* and the vague term *thing*. The maintenance of these features shows that Albert has, in fact, resisted the requirement to adopt a formal tone for this presentation. His comment about the *shine thing* being *a load of jibber-jabber* refers to the school reward scheme where pupils can lose points for not coming equipped for lessons or for misbehaving. His criticism of the scheme is unsurprising because he would rarely make it to the end of a week with as many points

as he started. But his use of the term *jibber-jabber* gives some indications of his imaginative and creative use of language which was a frequent marker of his talks. This dexterity seems to be one of the attributes which affords him his status as a leader among his peers.

His reference to abolishing the school uniform (*you can wear whatever you want*) touches on one of the most persistent struggles between teachers and pupils who engage in acts of resistance. Eckert (2000: 61) and Moore (2003: 58) both talk about pupils resisting the school uniform codes as small acts of rebellion intended to show the teacher that the pupils were resisting the authority of the school. In schools with a strict uniform code (which was the case in all three schools) attempts to wear outer clothing can be seen as attempts to maintain some sense of individuality in the face of a requirement for uniformity and it isn't surprising that pupils inclined towards this type of resistance are those like Albert who are not investing in their education and, therefore, have the least to gain by conforming to its rules. The overall stance adopted by Albert in this presentation is playful and imaginative, but he takes the opportunity (in a light hearted way) to rail against many of the rules that are likely to make his time at school confrontational. The position he takes up is likely to find an enthusiastic audience among like-minded pupils as he rails against the structures, that they might feel, oppress them.

Daniel, possibly under the influence of Albert, initially positions himself as a conventional head teacher before revealing a different head teacher identity.

h^{x0}iya my um - I'm the new h^{x1}ead teacher at the school um I do n't h^{z0}ave many rules but one of 'em^{<f0>} is um . do n't back chat . um sell what⁰ever you want and

for dinners we'll bring you k f c or summat^{<f0>} ^{<ge>} . I dunno what can I go on about
. yeah but what can you go on about^{<inf>} dinners for . chips . pizza is nice . for a
pound^{<f1>} [interruption] yeah we like sausage as well . um you can also buy sausage
bean and mash . yorkshire pudding um . we're gonna^{<f0>} get a few clubs togeth⁰er .
like um a food fight club . that'll be the best club . like¹ you get to throw food at x's
h^{x1}ead [interruption]

After initially saying he will not allow *back chat*, he shifts his stance to advocate a liberalisation of school rules, many of which would favour the most disruptive pupils. His comment about *sell[ing] whatever you want* refers to another persistent problem in schools whereby pupils bring in and sell bottles of pop, chocolate bars and other (mainly unhealthy) snacks. Boys often compete with each other to sell goods and this can become a source of friction and fighting. It can also lead to pupils incurring debts, which lead to further tensions, including allegations of bullying, meaning that pupils who are successful at it are often among the toughest in the school. For these reasons, selling is strongly prohibited in school and by condoning it in his presentation, Daniel is positioning himself as one of these pupils. In identity terms, he is trying to affiliate himself with the toughest pupils in the school.

Daniel (as with other presentations he gave) doesn't seem to have done any planning for his talk, as can be seen when he dries up and asks *what can I go on about?* and as he searches for something to say, he fixes on what the school canteen can offer for dinner. The suggestions he makes are all unhealthy snacks which the school will have battled to educate pupils against over the recent years. This shows Daniel positioning himself as someone who sees the school as an out group to be resisted and challenged. However, this tough persona is contradicted by other evidence from his presentation.

During his presentation, Daniel is heckled by other speakers but, unlike Albert who has the confidence to roll with the interruption, Daniel responds by shifting his footing onto a more defensive stance, asking his heckler *what can I go on about?* This response shows Daniel's weak position in the group hierarchy.

During this presentation Daniel maintained many low-prestige variants for his head teacher's 'voice' using nine low-prestige variants and only three high-prestige ones, two of which were the /h/ on *head*. Seen from this perspective, by maintaining his own 'voice', Daniel is positioning himself as someone prepared to resist the requirements of the activity.

Evan's 'New Head' presentation was particularly interesting because, as discussed in 6.3, he is an aspirational pupil but found himself in a group with several nonconformist pupils, and followed on from Daniel's head teacher performance. During his 'New Head' presentations Evan's battle between his pro-educational instincts and his wish not to bring negative attention to himself by deviating away from the tone adopted by others is fought out, as shown below:

hello I am the new head of x and during this term I expect pure behaviour and no chatting back to teachers . I have ten rules in my school . um . no chewing . um . no . talking to teachers badly . you must do your homework um must bring your equipment must um be in your uniform . um I ca n't remember the rest of the rules now . what else am I going to talk about today is um . schools right . okay . no I've go – okay school dinners . school dinners will be like this . monday . we'll have burger with cheese and onions . you ca n't have onions if you do n't want to . with chips on the side . you can have ketchup or mayonnaise . drink you can have

milkshake . tuesday you can have chips . burger . cheese . onions . and a milkshake
wednesday you can have chips . a burger . ketchup and a milkshake³⁹

As Evan begins his presentation he positions himself as an authoritarian head teacher more similar to those performed by the middle-class pupils in the Pennine-top group and, given his status as an outlier, this would be expected. But as he begins to list his rules, he seems to lose confidence in this approach and this part of his speech is littered with the filler *um*, showing that he was having to buy some thinking time as he spoke. As Evan begins to make his list there is a lot of background noise on the recording and some of the other boys seem to be becoming bored and restless. There then comes a moment when he decides to abandon the authoritarian head teacher identity he has constructed which he signals by saying that he *can't remember the rest of his list* (Evan had previously claimed to have a photographic memory).

This instigates a change in footing, leading to a less formal stance (Snell, 2013: 113). Evan spends a few moments thinking aloud and considering what to replace the abandoned identity with – *what else am I going to talk about today is um . schools right . okay . no I've go* – before he copies the topic of *school dinners* from Daniel and ends by listing fast foods. The head teacher identity performed after this is much less contentious and less open to challenge or disapproval from the restless boys. In other presentations Evan wasn't afraid to show himself to be witty and imaginative but his change of stance during this presentation appeared to be in response to the negativity coming from the group. Unlike Albert and Daniel, whose shifts away from a conventional head teacher position are self-motivated, Evan's shift appears to be

³⁹ Unfortunately the audio recording of this presentation was lost in a computer crash before I was able to mark phonetic variables

prompted by the response he receives from his audience. Having got the tone of his presentation wrong – in terms of the expectations of his peers – he had to adapt quickly in order to avoid the risk of social sanctions. This shows the power of the in-group culture and it had a seriously detrimental effect on the quality of his presentation. Evan is an intelligent and aspirational pupil who should be proud of his attitude and yet he was unable to find the courage to present this identity in front of his peers.

Before leaving the Valley Wide High boy's 'New Head' presentations, there was one which was particularly striking, unusual and revealing and was delivered by Albert. At first, I didn't group this in the 'New Head' category because, as shown below, the themes he discusses are nothing to do with school but when I looked back over the list of prompts given to speakers in the final session, I realised that I had inadvertently asked Albert to make the 'New Head' topic for a second time, not realising that he had already done it⁴⁰. This shouldn't have been an issue and several speakers gave two or more presentations on the same topic during the study. However, Albert chose to ignore the prompt he'd been given and gave the following presentation instead:

h^{x0}ello my name is albert . and I like to play with the fishes sometimes [laughter and interruption] I'm only joking . I am albert . and um . I like to go . swimming with⁰ the sharks and . playing with the .unicorns . unicorns are a very beautiful creature . 'mazing colours with a nice little h^{x1}orn sat^{<nsg5>} on top of their h^{x1}ead . very mythological and can fly which I th⁰ink's very amazing . h^{x1}opefully one day I will buy a unicorn . well . as a pet . and then I will take h^{z0}im for flying

⁴⁰ Although I gave pupils the freedom to choose their own topics, I asked all pupils to make the 'New Head' presentation after noticing that it appeared to reveal aspects of identity during the trialling process

lessons and . everyth⁰ing^{<ge>} and look after ‘em^{<f0>} . and I will paint ‘em^{<f0>} different colours and also I will give ‘em^{<f0>} a wash every single day . um because^{<f1>} they’re very graceful and beaut^liful creatures that deserve the care of a nice loving man^{<*>} . and um h^{x1}opefully I want it to be gold black yellow orange . purple . pink red brown and . all different multiple colours because^{<f1>} I th⁰ink it’ll look very nice . and very stunning and then . I will take h^{z0}im to church and everything^{<ge>}

The presentation was very well received among his friends, with Bradley commenting admiringly at the end of his own presentation *I think it’s quite funny how x did that about unicorns and . he [inaudible]... and also he does like^l . all sorts of stuff*

This is a playful and imaginative presentation which reveals several things about how Albert is choosing to position himself. The fact that he has deviated away from the prompt so completely is not surprising given his independent nature and his willingness to challenge authority. His opening comment about ‘playing with the fishes’ isn’t clear but may be a corruption of the phrase made famous in the Godfather film, ‘sleep with the fishes’, which refers to someone being murdered and dumped in the sea or river by the mafia. The phrase has entered the lexicon to the extent that it is listed in the online Urban Dictionary (2013). The change from ‘sleeping’ to ‘playing’ cleverly takes away the ‘victim’ status but maintains the edgy and lawless connotations. This opening elicits laughter from his friends, probably because they expected him to give a ‘New Head’ presentation. But the tone of the presentation then changes and becomes dreamlike with a fairy-tale quality, provided by imagery such as *very beautiful [unicorn], nice little horn* and the list of colours. The fact that the tone changes so fundamentally hints

that Albert didn't have a plan for this presentation and is making it up as he goes along, which again would be consistent with his nonconformist identity.

The narrative he constructs here positions him as a gentle and *nice loving man* who admires the *grace* and *beauty* of the unicorns and treats them well, *taking him for flying lessons* and *wash[ing] 'em*, and this is not what would be expected of him, which suggests that he is being playful. The final comment about taking his unicorn to church is also interesting here because Valley Wide High is a Catholic school and links to the church are a big part of the school institution. However, out of all the Valley Wide High pupils, only Bradley, Evan and Albert said that 'being religious' was important to them and their friends and, given that much of Albert's identity is formed around challenging authority, I suspect that Albert was using irony when he agreed with the statement about 'being religious'. Phonetically, Albert doesn't seem to have shifted out of his own speech patterns during this presentation: it has a mix of high- and low-prestige /h/s (four realised, three dropped) and a single token of /t/, which was realised, but all four /θ/s are fronted.

This soft and gentle identity isn't in line with Albert's reputation as the most nonconformist member of the class. But it is perhaps the confidence that comes with holding such a high status in his group that allows him to perform this identity. By deviating away from the prompt in this way, Albert is engaging in a small act of rebellion of the type described by researchers such as Eckert (2000: 61) and Moore (2003: 58) and this is likely to gain him kudos among some of his friends; but by using such rich and vibrant language, he is showing that he is linguistically dextrous and imaginative. Whatever might have motivated Albert to produce this presentation, it

shows that we cannot assume a link between anti-school attitudes and low-prestige speech on the one hand and linguistic impoverishment on the other.

9.4 Mill Town boys

The performance of the Mill Town boys during ‘New Head’ presentations was unexpected because I thought they would take the opportunity to have some fun with the concept and offer some wayward headships, but this wasn’t the case and all Mill Town boys, to varying degrees, positioned themselves as conventional and sensible head teachers. For example, although Roger offered some ideas aimed at generating some banter with his friends – he said that the new school uniform would be red as a tribute to Manchester United despite his friends being fans of other clubs – the wider tone of his presentation was professional, using phrases such as:

- in my school um · I want it to the best and it will be the best
- so . students . be nice · no [bad] beh⁰aviour · dress properly

Sedrick, like Roger, spoke about expanding the provision of sports so that pupils would *feel · um . welcome to join any clubs · and be part . to represent our school* which again offers a positive portrait of the school under his leadership. He said he would change the uniform to include blazers *so we look like a really · weath⁰y school* and said he would like to have *really educat¹ed · kids . and well educat⁰ed ... teachers*. These comments show that Sedrick wants his school to be friendly and welcoming, as well as professional and successful. His comments about wearing blazers shows an awareness of the image that school uniforms represent in the community and that he wants his school to enjoy a more prestigious image than it might currently have. Implicit in this

comment is a belief that the current school uniform is associated in Sedrick's mind with the school having a reputation as not being wealthy.

These sentiments may be prevalent at the school because of the huge investment that has been made in the town's secondary system following the northern mill town riots in the early 2000s. After the riots, secondary schools in the area were replaced with new state-of-the-art buildings and there was a concerted effort to invigorate the town both economically and culturally. Along with the new school infrastructures, great efforts were made to establish professional and forward-thinking school philosophies so it is likely that the type of sentiments expressed by these pupils will have been observed by them by the senior leadership teams at their school. To that extent, the positions taken up by these pupils reflect the head teacher norms as they have experienced them. This would not be the case at either Pennine High or Valley Wide High which have had no such cultural re-launching.

While Sedrick and Roger presented positive head teacher identities, Solomon's presentation is more difficult to interpret. On the face of it, he offers a similar vision of an improved school, but his linguistic style is more nuanced and creative, making the position he takes up more difficult to interpret. Through his presentation, subtle changes in footing hint at irony or sarcasm, as shown in the extract below:

beh⁰aviour · is gonna be really good · we're all gonna be swots · um we're gonna
h⁰ave to dress nice and neat · or · it gon- gonna be [inaudible] lovely right ·
lovely · yeah · radical

Swots will be seen by this group as a pejorative term for conscientious and scholarly pupils and its inclusion here hints at an ironic stance. The terms *nice* and *lovely* are quite subtle stylistic choices here and could be seen by Solomon's friends as evidence that he has crossed into an alternative identity, a move which could 'grant him a pass' for the sentiments he is expressing. The term *radical*, however, shows another change of footing, this time back towards an identity involving urban youth culture. Although Solomon offers some good ideas, for example that badly behaved pupils will have to complete a booklet as part of their punishment, his style walks a fine line between sincerity and sarcasm as can be seen through the angle-bracketed comment I made during the following transcription:

so · beh^{x1}aviour's gonna^{<f0>} be really good you're gonna^{<f0>} dress neat
[inaudible] <sarcastic?> yeah good

The question mark at the end of my note indicates that Solomon's style was difficult for me to interpret, highlighting the subtlety of his linguistic style.

The order of presentations is insightful here because Roger gave the first 'New Head' presentation in this group of three friends, thereby setting the tone – which Sedrick duly adopted. When Solomon gives his own 'New Head' presentation, he appeared to be taking his tonal cue from Roger but his sarcasm and irony show that he may in fact be parodying Roger's style, perhaps as an act of subtle banter or because he doesn't agree with the sentiments being expressed.

Wilson's presentation was also interesting because it began 'in character' as a head teacher but involved shifts in footing as the presentation progressed – and this can be seen in both content and linguistic style:

this is wilson speak – · this is wilson speaking the new h¹ead master · this is wilson · th¹ank you everyone · beh^{x1}aviour in this school is absolutely appalling · I mean I h^{z0}ave looked at the grades and · believe me those are some prett¹y [inaudible] · now · you're dresses · yes · they are v – they – they're terrible · dresses · I mean h⁰ave you seen 'em · they're black · with⁰ a red t shirt · I mean black dunt even suit red · h⁰ow stupid · could the last person be · so today · we are changing the uniform · for pink · for the girls · and green · monsters · green · uniform with⁰ monsters on 'em^{<f0>} · for the boys · and the new records · reward scheme · is · screw · those old reward slips · I mean · only – · li – t p's get them · yeah you know you ca n't even buy owt you h⁰ave to be good for like¹ · all year · like¹ what's the point in that · so therefore · you should just vote for me for be your president cos I am supercool· yea:: · this is wilson speaking · wilson goes out · peace

His presentation begins with him positioning himself as a regular head teacher: in the first three lines he sounds his /h/s, realises his /θ/s and /t/s and describes behaviour as *absolutely appalling*. But by the fifth line the positive head teacher he presented has begun to give way to something more in keeping with his own identity, both linguistically and attitudinally. This shift to his own voice is shown stylistically through the /θ/ elision at the beginning of *them* (signalling a more informal stance), through the /θ/-fronting on *with* and through the nonstandard negated auxiliary *dunt*. In content terms, the italicised section shows a shift away from the head teacher identity. His

disdain for red school uniforms (see above), which he describes as *stupid*, is an act of banter with Patrick and was part of a recurring theme involving football (one of Wilson's presentations was entirely given over to singing pro-Manchester United football songs). He then gives a comical alternative idea for boys' uniforms *with⁰ monsters on 'em* before he attacks the current school reward scheme, saying *screw · old reward slips*. The second half of the presentation has the dialect term *owt* and the only instances of *like-DM*. By the final part of the presentation Wilson seems to have lost the thread of his presentation as he appeals for people to vote him as their president *cos I'm supercool*. His sign off is an adapted version of the in-group term *peace out*, an unusual sign off used exclusively by Mill Town boys, again showing that Wilson had by this stage reverted back to his own identity. By the end of the presentation, the position of a conventional head teacher that he took up at the beginning has completely evaporated.

In this presentation the shift away from the head teacher identity and towards his own identity is mirrored in both the style and the content of his speech. When Wilson is performing the identity of a head teacher, the linguistic choices he makes are at the prestigious, formal end of the spectrum, showing that he is aware of these features and can use them where there are no identity consequences. During this part of the presentation the content is consistent with this formality as it raises an issue about poor behaviour using lexis appropriate to the character of a head teacher. As Wilson's own identity takes over from the head teacher identity he has constructed, both the linguistic choices he makes and the content of the presentation shift, demonstrating the links between linguistic style and content.

9.5 Mill Town girls

Among the Mill Town girls, two presentations are worth comparison. Wendy and Rose share the same background and yet they adopted very different approaches to their presentation tasks. Rose consistently generated the least speech among Mill Town High pupils and she gave two separate very short presentations involving lots of silence as follows:

h¹ey . it's . rose again . um . yeah . I am . the new h¹ead of x college . and . the beh^{x1}aviour is not acceptable . so I am going to like¹ . do . like¹ a beh¹aviour system . um . and . um . the new reward system . um . is . I do n't know . um . um . bye

rose what . yeah . bad beh¹aviour is not acceptable . I am the new . h¹ead . after school activit¹ies . um . box- there will be boxing . um . dancing . trampolining . fitness . um . bye .

Neither of these presentations shows an attempt to construct the identity of a head teacher and appear to be carried out in Rose's own voice. The opening of the first presentation, *hey*, the discourse marker *yeah* and the two instances of *like*-DM give the presentation a casual tone. Although Rose says that current behaviour is not acceptable, she doesn't suggest any improvements and doesn't appear to have put any prior thought into planning the topic. When she touches on after-school activities she focuses on additional sports opportunities, a practice common among working-class boys' groups. Through the choices she makes, Rose is positioning herself as someone who is not prepared to invest in the activities required.

The 'cool indifference' shown in this presentation was also evident in other presentations. For example, she begins one presentation by saying she needed to finish sending a text before she could begin her presentation, saying *no I need to carry on text- I need to send it to someone · um ... what is there to do . yeah • right.* The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited in school and although Rose self-corrects before she admits to sending a text when she should be beginning her presentation, she reveals enough information for this to be made clear. She follows this up by asking what there is to do, showing that she hadn't planned a presentation and was only just looking at the topics. Here Rose is positioning herself as a disengaged pupil who is making the minimal contribution to the tasks.

Although Wendy is from the same background as Rose, the position she takes up is very different and the vision she presents is positive and pupil-centred:

my name is miss winston and · I'm gonna^{<f0>} talk to you · because^{<f1>} I'm the new h^{x1}ead · and there is · lots of new th¹ings · about this school going to^{<f1>} change · and · um · there's like¹ the beh^{x1}aviour's very poor · and we want you to · be good in lessons and we'll do lots of th¹ings like reward schemes new reward scheme · s'then you can go on trips when you beh^{x1}ave well · and you can · do like¹ · after school clubs now · they're like¹ h^{x1}omework clubs and · geography classes after school · you can go into the achievement zone · um · but there's also · a new punishment system where you · if you're naught¹y then you go in on call · which is where you get sent from one lesson and go into a room where you h^{z1}ave to be silent · and copy your work out · there's new - a new · dress · so you've got to · dress fully · and wear · full uniform · black shoes with⁰ black soles and black · socks · and black · laces in your shoes · so that ·

that's it from me now · I'll talk to you next time we h^{z0}ave an assembly or if I see you around school . goodbye

She begins the presentation with *my name is miss winston*, establishing an appropriately professional stance, and ends with the formal term *goodbye*. Wendy singles out geography classes for her after-school activity, which is an unusual deviation away from the sporting or artistic clubs cited by other Mill Town High pupils. In her presentation she also focuses on the benefits pupils can enjoy if they are successful, such as going on trips and having an *achievement zone*. She also constructs a very caring and conscientious head teacher, saying that she'll talk to pupils if she sees them around school. This was the first of two presentations and the second one is equally positive, including statements such as:

- h¹ave fun in school
- we want school to be a place where you feel safe
- enjoy yourself inside school
- [we want to] improve the way that you work
- we want to also · make sure that you · get all the A stars · As and B's and C's GCSEs · and you can · like¹ so then when you grow up you can h⁰ave any job that you want

These comments show a thoughtful and forward-thinking head teacher. When Wendy's 'New Head' presentation is contrasted with Rose's, the difference is stark in terms of preparation, effort and content. The key to the different approaches may be revealed in the different scores from the social indices which offer some explanations as to why

Wendy may be motivated to make a strong effort while Rose isn't. Rose and Wendy scored very differently across most of the social indices, as shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Comparison between Rose and Wendy on social indices

Pupils	<i>Home culture</i>	<i>Comm embed</i>	<i>Friendship group</i>	<i>Att to School</i>	<i>Aspiration</i>
Rose	0.75	0.84	0.85	0.48	0.50
Wendy	0.55	0.70	0.64	0.44	0.75

Rose's home culture is much more pro-education than that of Wendy, as is her friendship group. However, Rose is much more deeply embedded in her local community than Wendy whilst Wendy scores 25 points higher than Rose for aspiration. The discussion in 2.4.1 showed that being deeply embedded in a working-class community can, for some individuals, act as a brake on aspiration, whilst having high aspiration can lead working-class pupils to invest in their education. These figures bear this out: Wendy's personal aspiration coupled with her relatively low level of community embeddedness could be leading her to invest in her education while Rose's depth of embeddedness in the local working-class community and lower level of aspiration could motivate her to view the school as an out-group to be resisted.

9.6 Summary of discussion

Analysis of the 'New Head' presentations has underlined how a complex array of factors motivates and influences pupils as they construct identities in the classroom. The first part of the analysis showed how social class can pattern onto attitudes, and how these can in turn influence approaches to presentations; for example, the Pennine-top pupils were much more likely to choose to perform a head teacher with an authoritarian attitude whilst the working-class pupils from Valley Wide High were much more likely to perform an anarchic head teacher. However, this wasn't true of

the Mill Town High pupils who all avoided those extremes to make some thoughtful and innovative suggestions during their presentations.

The decision about which type of head teacher to construct proved to be a very good indicator of both social attitudes and linguistic variables with pupils who performed a tough head teacher being more likely to be pro-school and to use high-prestige forms. At a discourse level, the different positions that speakers chose to take up for this task revealed insightful aspects of their attitudes and allegiances.

There were been several instances where boys appear to be under pressure to conform to in-group norms, as predicted by the SIT. Evan struggled to escape the gravitational pull of the tone set by his predecessors, with consequences for the quality of his presentation, but Solomon's parody of Roger's presentation suggests that he held a stronger position in his friendship group than Evan did in his. This was revealed, in part, through Evan's change in footing as he felt compelled to respond to the stirrings of his audience and to take up a position which would be viewed more favourably by his peers.

Gender differences in presentations show that boys have less social scope for topical variation than girls and were more reluctant to deviate away from subjects they knew would be viewed favourably by their friends. For boys, the most recurrent themes in their presentations was a desire to bring more access to sports and the use of humour.

This chapter also shows that pupils with NSDs, far from being linguistically restricted, in fact have a greater stock of linguistic resources at their disposal, which they can use in imaginative ways. For example, Albert was highly creative in performing an identity

which didn't compromise his anti-authoritarian reputation but which displayed an impressively rich and vibrant linguistic style whilst at the same time drawing compliments from his friends. Solomon was similarly able almost to appear to conform to the presentation type adopted by Roger and followed by Sedrick, but was able to embed just enough alien speech features to raise questions about the authenticity of the voice, which would place some distance between himself and the views he was expressing.

The presentations of Wendy and Rose showed how attitudinal factors may influence the efforts that pupils put into their presentations: Rose, who is deeply embedded in her community but lacks aspiration, barely makes any effort in her presentation; Wendy, on the other hand, doesn't feel as deeply embedded in her community but is more aspirational than the rest of her group and she gave a thoughtful and intelligent presentation.

This analysis supports two of the recurring issues of the study: there are a multitude of issues affecting identity construction at any one time and boys have a more restricted set of possibilities than girls.

For me, the analysis in this chapter also shows that the content of the presentations carries a much greater power to influence listeners than does variation at a phonetic or lexico-grammatical level. In the analysis beyond sentence level, presentation content, narrative structure and communicative force were much more potent than they were during analysis below the sentence level.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter I set out to answer the RQs. To answer the first RQ, asking how linguistic variation is used in the construction of identities, I look at how pupils from different backgrounds and with different attitudes used the linguistic resources at their disposal in the construction of identities. In regard to the second RQ, asking who benefits from the Requirement, I look at various groups of pupils to see how the Requirement might impact them. In the third RQ, regarding what changes should be made to it in response to the findings of this study, I put forward changes which, I believe, would remove any bias from the current system as well as laying the foundations for a continuation of the social changes towards fairness that are already underway. Finally, I critique the study before suggesting areas of interest for further research.

10.1 RQ1: How is linguistic variation used in the construction of social identities?

The findings of this study confirm that pupils from middle- and working-class backgrounds use language differently: The data in Chapter 7 showed that in the upper quintiles in the three phonetic variables pupils from Pennine-top were heavily represented whilst pupils from the working-class schools dominate the lower quintiles. This is especially true of /h/ and /θ/ realisations.

This discussion begins with a critique of how pupils used linguistic resources to signal localness and disaffectedness. In the second part of the discussion, I look at other influences which seemed to affect the construction of identities, such as in-group

affiliations and mood. I look at the impact of identity load and show how linguistic features are always clustered together to generate specific and nuanced identities.

10.1.1 Connoting 'localness'

In 5.5, features were discussed which have long-standing associations with northern working-class speech (although they are not exclusive to these communities) – /h/-dropping, DAR and *were-for-was* – and there was evidence that these features were being used by working-class pupils as part of a package which signalled local identities.

/H/-realisation remains one of the strongest markers of middle- versus working-class speech in these communities: middle-class pupils had consistently high realisations of /h/ in HLs, making it the default variant for them and leaving them very little room to shift during LLs. But this wasn't the case at the working-class schools where vacillation between realisation and dropping was the norm. Whilst many of these pupils were able to shift towards a higher realisation of /h/ when playing a role, their levels of realisation dropped during HLs, suggesting that /h/-dropping is still one of the features used to signal a local, working-class identity.

As well as /h/-dropping, the two local dialect markers, *were-for-was* and DAR, appeared to be used in the construction of local working-class identities. In this study, only 20% of Pennine-top pupils had DAR in their speech repertoire, compared to over 80% of Mill Town boys (the highest using group), though very few pupils used the feature more than once or twice. Of the four pupils who realised DAR more than 10% of the time, three of them were from Mill Town High and one from Valley Wide High. For *were-for-was*, twenty-one pupils used the feature more than 10% of the time; all of them were from working-class groups and fifteen of them from the working-class

schools. As with DAR, these pupils had a wide mix of attitudes to school, showing that these localised grammatical features cannot be used to infer attitudes.

Both DAR and *were-for-was* were found to increase when the identity load was high in the pupils who had them in their repertoire. This suggests that pupils using these features when speaking as themselves were doing so as part of the construction of an authentic identity. Both features were used intermittently (rather than consistently) by all pupils who had them in their repertoire. No doubt some of this vacillation can be accounted for by analysing other variables, such as differences in word environment, and this is potentially an area for further study.

10.1.2 ‘Disaffiliation’

A number of pupils in the study signalled their disaffiliation from the school through the use of the linguistic resources at their disposal, particularly Jooky, Albert, Daniel, Costineto, Rose, Elma and some of the Mill Town High boys.

This was often signalled through a reluctance to adhere to the requirements of the study. The most obvious example of this was from the Mill Town High boys who put on accents and ignored the prompts. For this tight-knit group, the study was seen as part of an out-group to be challenged.

The most salient manifestation of disaffection was through the use of taboo language and the analysis in 8.1.4 showed that working-class pupils were much more likely to use it than middle-class pupils. This would be expected in light of the social factors which are likely to predispose certain pupils towards or away from conforming to the requirements of the school, as discussed in Chapter 2 and confirmed among the pupils in this study in Chapters 5 and 6. There was also a gender split in the use of taboo

language with boys being much more likely to use it than girls. This was often linked to the urge to make their friends laugh and this once again leaves working-class boys on the wrong side of the schools' cultural norms.

That said, the two speakers who used the most shocking language, Jooky from Shadow High and the rebellious Elma, are female, with Elma also coming from a middle-class home. The inappropriate content of Elma's speech was absent from the two working-class schools and it could be that the liberal culture at Pennine High allows its pupils a greater degree of freedom in the topics which they feel free to discuss. Discipline at Valley Wide High and Mill Town High seemed to be more robustly maintained. It seems, therefore, that school culture is also an intervening variable in the linguistic choices pupils make.

The most shocking contribution came from Jooky from Shadow High. Motivations for her use of taboo language are likely to be very different from those of Elma. Jooky was a strong and gregarious individual but she found herself embedded in culture in which middle-class values are taken as the norm (the school environment). The message given by teachers – that educational success is imperative to achieving career success – is much more likely to be alien to pupils from Jooky's type of background, as discussed in 2.4. She was academically unsuccessful so her options for success in school are limited to accepting a low status within the school (and constructing an appropriate identity), or finding something she can succeed at. I suggest that, being a spirited and confident individual, she is following the latter path and has found that her willingness to break the school rules affords her prestige among likeminded pupils.

Only three pupils had more than three tokens of taboo language, Elma, Constinetto S and Albert S, and all three of them have been discussed in regard to their nonconformist

and/or anti-authoritarian attitudes. I would argue that the use of taboo language, when compared to phonetic or lexico-grammatical language, is likely to have a much greater impact on teachers' evaluations. When pupils reached for this language, they were overtly challenging the authority of the school. For pupils who are investing in their education, the use of this type of language would be unlikely to cross their mind but, as discussed in 5.6, for some pupils there is little motivation to avoid such terms.

There were some indications in the study that /θ/-fronting was being used stylistically to signal disaffection – and was particularly associated with a male, working-class youth identity with possible connotations of an edgy, urban identity. Differences between the Pennine-top and other groups were much greater for /θ/-realisation than they were in regard to /t/- or /h/-realisation, suggesting that the feature is a stronger indicator of social class. Pennine High boys had realisations over 0.80 compared to 0.30 or below for boys at the working-class schools. The group with the very lowest realisation, Mill Town boys, were drawn from the school with the tightest social network and the least conformist attitude to the study. But the biggest difference comes when social class, attitude to school and gender considerations are all taken into account. Costineto S symbolised this most strongly by using the feature as part of a package designed to signal the more anti-authoritarian attitude he presented in the second year of the study (see 7.3). His increase in the use of /θ/-fronting was matched by changes to his scores on the *attitude to school* index and to the performance of a more aggressive and hostile identity. Costineto's increased uptake of this feature appeared to be part of a reinvention of himself in which he affiliated with a more nonconformist youth culture.

However, for one pupil in particular, /θ/-fronting may be being used quite differently: I speculate that Evan may be using the feature as part of a strategy to ingratiate himself with the nonconformist members of his class who form the dominant group.

10.1.3 Discourse variation

One of the richest mines for analysis in this study has been qualitative analysis carried out at a discourse level on the 'New Head' presentations. Decisions about which type of head teacher identity to construct proved to be a very good indicator of both social attitudes and linguistic variables: pupils performing a tough head teacher were more likely to be middle-class and pro-school, but less deeply embedded in their communities and much more likely to use high-prestige forms; pupils who constructed a liberal or anarchic head teacher were more likely to be working-class and less likely to invest in their education, they were more deeply embedded in their communities and had fewer instances of high-prestige speech forms. But there were unexpected identities created too with many Mill Town High pupils performing conscientious head teachers and voicing a desire for their school to establish a more prestigious reputation in the community. I speculate that this could come about through a mimicking of the narrative of change and aspiration introduced into mill town schools in the cultural re-launch following the riots. Head teacher presentations at this school also led me to believe that the content of presentations has a greater power to influence speaker evaluations than linguistic features. The aspirational Wendy, in particular, constructed a convincing head teacher identity in which she revealed herself to be a warm and caring person with some inspiring ideas about how her school should be developed.

There were times when in-groups appeared to have problematic influences over their members. Evan struggled to escape the gravitational pull of the tone set by Albert and

Daniel during his 'New Head' presentations, with consequences for the quality of his presentations. The consequence of the disconnect between Evan's opinions and his expressed views was hesitation, incoherence and a lack of fluidity in his presentations. This appears to be a particularly difficult issue for boys, who are exposed to more pressure to adhere to a narrower range of in-group norms than girls. However, Solomon's parody of Roger's presentation suggests that if the speaker holds a high status in the friendship hierarchy, they can challenge the orthodoxy – in Solomon's case, subtly and skilfully (see 9.4).

Analysis of the 'New Head' presentations also showed that working-class pupils, far from being linguistically restricted, in fact have a rich stock of linguistic resources at their disposal which they can use in imaginative ways. For example, Albert was highly creative in performing an identity which didn't compromise his anti-authoritarian reputation but which displayed an impressively rich and vibrant linguistic style. This has clear echoes of the findings of Labov (1972a) in his early work with black inner-city children where he found that they were:

bathed in verbal stimulation from morning to night. We see many speech events which depend upon the competitive exhibitions of verbal skills ... a whole range of activities in which the individual gains status through [their] use of language.

There were also social and gender differences in the New Head presentations. Results showed once again that working-class boys in this study had narrower topical ranges than girls. For boys, two recurring themes were a desire to bring more access to sports and to make their friends laugh. Boys were more reluctant to deviate from topics they knew would be viewed favourably by their friends during presentations. It could be that, in general, boys are more merciless than girls in challenging deviations away from

group norms (note that the person beaten up in Belfast was a boy – see 3.3.2) but, as discussed in 2.3, further analysis would need to take account of additional social and cultural variables before the impact of gender categories could be weighed and assessed.

10.1.4 Identity load

In 3.3 I introduced the concept of identity load, a socio-psychological cline which varies depending on how much of our own identity is invested in the voice. I suggested that a high identity load would be most likely when pupils were speaking as themselves – meaning that the speech features they used would be congruent with their background – whilst a low identity load would be most likely when pupils were playing a role because there would be no expectation that their speech style would be congruent with their background and they would be freed up from these constraints. This influenced my methodology and led to the development of the HL and LL presentation types.

Whilst several features were not found to shift significantly between HLs and LLs (against my expectations), there were two features which did, *like*-DM and /t/-glottalling, both of which have been found to connote youth culture and informality (see 5.5). In both instances, when pupils were speaking as themselves, these features were very widely used but when pupils were playing a role, their use dropped significantly. This was the case for all social groups and both genders and can be interpreted in different ways. It could be that pupils avoid these two features when they are playing the role of a responsible adult because they understand that they are unlikely to be part of the adult's formal linguistic repertoire; or it could be that they choose the features when the identity load is high because the features are used as part of a package

designed to signal their own youth identity and informality. More likely, it will be a combination of them both.

Although *like*-DM was linked to the performance of a broad youth identity – and this was confirmed by the significant shifts towards its use between HLs and LLs – different situations showed how differences in motivations and influences can trigger shifts towards a voice with a higher identity load. When Freya lost her audience (see 8.4) she was able to relax and her speech style became more natural. This triggered a very heavy use of *like*-DM. This shift also supports the identity load theory, albeit in an unexpected way. Prior to loss of her audience, Freya’s shyness motivated her to try to withhold her identity but when her audience left, she felt able to reveal it to a greater extent.

In contrast to this, Rose maintained her use of *like*-DM during LLs as part of a package of features designed to signal the fact that she was refusing to ‘play the game’ and wasn’t prepared to adopt a more formal identity. This could have been an act of disaccommodation against the authority of the school. The result that her ‘voice’ during the LLs maintained a high identity load and *like*-DM was a salient manifestation of this identity.

In regard to /h/-dropping, when Christopher was talking about his first day at school, a very personal presentation with a high identity load, he frequently dropped /h/ but when he was playing to role of a head teacher, he realised it. /h/-dropping is a very common features among working-class speakers right across England (see 5.5.1) so by increasing his use of the feature when speaking on a personal topic, he is indexing his membership of the local working-class community. Christopher’s friends and classmates will know his background and if the speech features he uses when speaking

in his own voice are not congruent with this background, the authenticity of the identity he is presenting will be brought into question. But by realising /h/ when playing a role, he shows that he understands the feature to be symbolic of high prestige speakers.

However, sometimes shifts in identity resulted in the construction of a different, rather than more authentic identity where the cline appeared to be about levels of anti-authoritarian attitude rather than authenticity. For example, when Daniel used the localised intensifiers, *well* and *proper* (with their connotations of urban youth) as part of a repetitive complaint against boring lessons, this didn't represent a shift towards or away from a high identity load – but was about signalling a different tone or mood (see 8.4). To complicate matters further, motivations for these types of performances were also influenced by orientation, which could be towards teachers or towards peer-groups.

Interesting support for the identity load theory came from the use of hypercorrect-/h/. The fact that all instances of hypercorrect-/h/ occurred during LLs shows how unnatural it can be to cross out of our real identities. The use of this feature occurred across all social groups and both genders – but only occurred when speakers were role-playing, meaning that they were adopting an inauthentic speech style. In these situations, the natural rhythms and fluidity of speech are interrupted as speakers try to simultaneously construct speech and self-police output, causing a loss of naturalness.

One of the most interesting findings in regard to identity construction was that pupils in the study always drew on a range of linguistic resources to construct quite specific identities. When Chris recounted his first day at school, the features he reached for connoted informality and localness in an overarching narrative which pitched him as a vulnerable young person alone in school. When Faye talked about her favourite hobby,

kickboxing, she mixed localised features with technical terms to create a specific identity which combined her community ties with her (relative) expertise in kickboxing. Similar observations were made in regard to a wide number of pupils discussed in Chapters 7 and 8: Albert's unicorn presentation, Daniel's complaint about his least favourite subject, Harriet's swim with dolphins and others were all found to involve features which clustered together to create a specific identity. The findings support the work of Snell (2013: 119-120) who found in her study that utterances can involve a variety of linguistic features with different connotations. In one utterance she identified SE, local dialect forms and supra-local or even global nonstandard features.

The choices pupils made about what type of head teacher to construct has some interesting implications for the concept of identity because, although many pupils were adopting the identity of a head teacher through their mannerisms and speech styles, the attitudes and ideologies they expressed were allied to their own (eg authoritarian or liberal). From this point of view, these pupils were still investing something of themselves in the head teacher identities they constructed.

10.1.5 Summary of RQ1

The broad picture found in the study was that, as expected, Pennine-top pupils use the most prestigious speech styles and pupils from the two working-class schools use the least. Working-class boys were consistently found to maintain the most low-prestige features as well as having the narrowest deviation away from their in-group norms.

But the analysis shows that there were many influences and motivations which can buffet pupils around as they construct their identities. Stylistic shifts were facilitated by changes in identity load (eg Chris' /h/-dropping/realising when talking about school from his own or a head teacher's perspective) the loss of audience (eg Freya's holiday

presentation), excitement (eg Harriet's holiday presentation), animosity towards topic (eg Daniel's 'boring lesson' presentation) or peer pressure (Evan losing his confidence when presenting a pro-school head teacher). Speech features can be designed to signal small-scale rebellion *and* linguistic dexterity, as shown by Albert. They can be motivated by aspiration, as Wendy appears to be, or a lack of ambition and an allegiance to an in-group, as is the case with Rose. And at times, a pupil's changing attitude can be correlated with changes to linguistic features, as was the case with Costineto's use of /θ/-fronting.

Another interesting aspect of the data is that grammatical variations in the study were found to have so many different aspects. The discussion in 5.2.2, involving the marking of NSG, identified many different categories. These included errors, acceptable nonstandard features, regional markers, urban youth markers, informal language and instances of crossing or mimicry. Each one of these has its own set of connotations and each hearer will make their own inference, influenced by their own experiences and the ideological standpoints those influences give rise to. This reinforced the point that has emerged several times in the study: that the government's position in regard to a standard-nonstandard dichotomy is vastly over-simplistic.

Pupils from different backgrounds were exposed to different pressures and constraints in the identities they felt able to construct. Pro-educational middle-class pupils in the study were found to be investing in their education (making them unlikely to use features signalling rebelliousness or disaffiliation) and they did not have nonstandard, localised dialect features as part of their repertoire. When their identity load was high, however, they were likely to utilise some features which signal affiliation to youth cultures, in particular /t/-glottalling and *like*-DM. But not all middle-class pupils were following the same conformist path. Elma's use of taboo language was designed to

construct a very specific identity in which rule-breaking, anti-social behaviour and the use of drink and drugs was the norm – though, as discussed in 5.5, it isn't clear that she would use the same terms in formal assessments with her regular teacher.

For the working-class pupils in the study, the situation is more difficult. Like middle-class pupils, they were found to make use of the features which signalled their youth identity when the identity load was high: *like-DM* and /t/-glottalling. But when they were at their most authentic, their speech was peppered with localised features. This increased when pupils were relaxed, excited or passionate. A small number of disaffected working-class pupils were found to reach for speech features which may connote an edgy urban youth identity, such as Costineto's /θ/-fronting and Daniel's use of intensifiers.

The findings here support early variationist studies suggesting that boys have a more restricted set of opportunities in the construction of identities than girls. For the boys in this study, there were certain themes which carried a cultural cachet which they seem to fix on, such as humour and sport, but outside of this, most boys appeared to have little scope for the imaginative construction of identities. On a broad quantitative level, boys were less linguistically dextrous than girls, as evidenced through their relative inability to style-shift during LLs and through their use of more low-prestige forms than girls across all measured indicators. However, on a qualitative level some boys, such as Albert and Solomon, were found to be linguistically creative and imaginative.

Whilst the study identified lots of evidence in support of the identity load theory, the picture was more complicated than I expected. The quantitative analysis of the three consonant variables, /h/, /t/ and /θ/, alongside the use of *like-DM*, showed a mixed picture whereby /t/ and *like-DM* showed consistent style-shifting based on identity load

but /h/ and /θ/ didn't. However, the qualitative analysis generated much more support for the identity load theory: there were many occasions where the use of localised features was found to correlate with an increase in the identity load, often within a presentation. This supports thy hypothesis that when pupils are investing in their voice, they will use the features that are congruent with their background which, the studies discussed in 3.3 suggest, will be designed to avoid charges of inauthenticity. Identities in this study were constructed through the manipulation of linguistic resources which cut across categorical boundaries. Phonetic, lexical and grammatical features formed clusters which often cut across linguistic levels, but they always did so within an overarching discourse and, it seemed to me, it was in the overarching discourse that identities were most strongly represented.

Analysis of the 'New Head' presentations revealed that identities could be embedded onto a performance at different levels: although pupils often style-shifted when playing a head teacher, the attitudes and ideologies they gave to their creation were often in tune with their own.

10.2RQ2: Who benefits from the Requirement?

In Chapter 1 I reviewed the development and implementation of the NC and showed that many of those who pressed for the Requirement to be embedded within the NC held what appear to be bigoted views about nonstandard dialects and those who speak them. In Chapter 2 I reviewed some of the issues which will impact on the ability of pupils to use formal, prestige features in the classroom. Middle-class pupils are more likely to benefit from pro-educational 'cultural capital'; their parents are more likely to have enjoyed educational success and are reaping its rewards; and the cultural norm among middle-class people is towards engaging with institutions. Their home dialects

are much more likely to be SE. But working-class pupils typically have lower levels of resources that aid educational success and the linguistic speech styles used in working-class communities are much more likely to include nonstandard features.

So the most important question for this study is this: who benefits? (Or, more provocatively, *cui bono*?) Does it serve working-class pupils well by equipping them for the future, or does it place unnecessary hurdles in their path and give an unfair advantage to middle-class pupils? There are two parts to this question. Firstly, there are issues of motivation: how do pupils' backgrounds, friends and personal attitudes predispose them to engage with school (and, therefore, to conform to the Requirement)? And, secondly, how does this go on to influence them in the linguistic decisions they make?

In terms of the social attitudes that pupils bring to their education, results from the social indices foregrounded the differences between middle- and working-class pupils. The data presented in Chapter 6 showed that the upper quintiles for the pro-school indices (*attitude to school, friendship culture and aspiration*) were made up overwhelmingly of middle-class pupils from Pennine-top, showing that their pro-educational home cultures were influencing their attitudes to school. Pupils from the working-class schools were almost absent from the upper quintiles but heavily represented in the lower quintiles. (That said, there were always exceptions to the trends, showing that it is problematic to infer attitudes from backgrounds.) These differences will affect how pupils are motivated to conform to the Requirement.

In answering this question, I will look at the different groups of pupils in the study and discuss the likely impact of the Requirement on them. For each group, I will give a brief overview of how their backgrounds and communities are likely to predispose them

to try to conform (or not) to the Requirement before looking at how their language may be advantageous or disadvantageous to them.

10.2.1 Middle-class pupils

The middle-class cohort in the Pennine-top group were, by far, the most engaged group in the study and their results show them to be investing more heavily in their education: they made greater use of the enrichment opportunities offered through extracurricular activities – they took part in twice as many intellectual and artistic activities as other groups and listed a larger number (and a greater diversity of) hobbies and interests. This can be seen in different ways. On one level, it shows that these pupils are taking more opportunities for personal enrichment than other pupils. On another level, they are proactively gathering evidence to show that they have diverse interests which will serve them well when, for example, they are applying for college places. In this respect, such engagement can be seen as acts of identity construction facilitated by the cultural capital invested in them by their parents. And on another level again, they are embarking on a potential life-long habit of embracing the opportunities available within institutions (which may later transfer to them building a career within a company), a trait which was evident among Willis's 'Ear'oles' and Eckert's 'Jocks' (see 3.3). This was in stark contrast to pupils from the working-class schools who engaged in after-school clubs much more infrequently – and often listed 'none' in the hobbies and interests box (see 6.2). These cultural differences will predispose middle-class pupils towards investing in their education and, therefore, confirming to the Requirement.

For most of the pupils from middle-class homes, the Requirement is likely to reinforce the messages they receive at home that certain situations demand formal spoken SE. Pupils in this group are likely to have received this message from their parents as part

of a package of cultural capital. The home dialect for these pupils was much more likely to be SE than it is for other groups of pupils and many of the middle-class pupils in this study, such as Humphrey, Penelope, Indiana, Eugene and Fred, already used the highest number of prestige features.

For some pupils, such as Humphrey and Roisin, who reported that friends complain that they sound too posh, there may be a tension between the messages reinforced through home and through the school and the messages received from their peer group. They may be faced with decisions about which affiliations are more important.

In comparison to other pupils though, the Requirement will afford middle-class pupils an advantage. During classroom presentations, these pupils will not need to self-monitor their dialectal output, leaving them free to speak fluently and with confidence.

10.2.2 Aspirational working-class pupils

Working-class pupils in this study covered a wide spectrum ranging from bottom-set nonconformist pupils at one end to highly aspirational pupils at the other; but there were cultural differences at the different schools. Within this study, aspirational working-class pupils from Pennine High had more opportunities to embed themselves with likeminded pupils than those from the working-class schools. The discussions in Chapters 6 showed that Pennine-mid working-class pupils are often well-represented in the upper quintiles of the pro-school indices. For example, Eileen was a mid-set pupil from a working-class home but she was personally aspirational (she wants to be a forensic scientist) and had embedded herself in an aspirational friendship group. Her scores on the *friendship group culture*, *attitude to school* and *aspiration* indices were all over 0.90. More significantly, her speech features were at the high-prestige end of the spectrum. This indicates that the broader social class intake of Pennine High is

impacting on the attitudes and aspirations of some of its working-class pupils by having groups of pro-educational middle-class pupils to engage with. This is unsurprising because the school has a broader range of social and cultural norms in which pupils can locate themselves as they construct their identities.

For pupils at the working-class schools, things were more problematic and complicated. Where there was no solid group of aspirational pupils, the pupils who found the courage to resist the prevailing culture of educational apathy or animosity – a group limited to Evan and Freya – found themselves as outsiders. The impact of the Requirement can be a mixed bag for these pupils: it is likely to reinforce their beliefs about how they need to present themselves in order to realise their aspirations but, as shown by Evan's low status within his group and his inability to break free from the prevailing in-group norms, it can leave pupils feeling isolated, low in confidence and unable to achieve a high-status in his peer group. In Evan's case, it also seems to have led him into a position where he adopts low-status traits which are likely to close down the differences between him and his peers; for example through his use of /θ/-fronting, by his capitulation in the face of agitation to his pro-school new head teacher presentation and by listing 'sleeping' as an interest. For Freya, who didn't seem to feel the same pressure to fit in as Evan, this left her without a close friendship group in her class.

In this study, although aspirational pupils like Evan realised a higher proportion of high-prestige variants for some features, they didn't deviate so far away from the local norms that their authenticity was brought into question. This leaves them at a disadvantage compared to the aspirational working-class pupils at Pennine High. The Requirement, I believe, brings with it the possibility that pupils such as Evan and Freya will be penalised as they negotiate identities which try to balance the need for authenticity with the need to adopt formal, high prestige features.

These problems are not primarily caused by the Requirement – they are the result of complex historical issues which lead to a culture in some working-class communities whereby the pursuit of social and economic capital (via affiliation with middle-class cultures) is seen as a form of cultural betrayal. This leads to a narrow social and cultural outlook, including the imposition of social sanctions for deviations away from local norms. But the Requirement exacerbates the problems by promulgating the belief that being aspirational and maintaining localised speech features are mutually exclusive. It is likely that pupils such as Evan would adopt the type of high-prestige speech features used by the social group he aspires to join and, in that respect, it is difficult to be clear about how much of the damage can be laid at the door of the Requirement here, but if localised speech features were deemed acceptable then the difficulties of his transition from one social group to the next might be lessened. The Requirement makes the ‘them-and-us’ distinction between the localised in-group (led by Albert) and the school more salient.

10.2.3 Disaffected working-class pupils

In the early stages of the study I expected to have a rich seam of data from disaffected working-class pupils at Shadow High but their withdrawal left me with a limited capacity to comment on them (see 5.2.1). In spite of this setback, there were opportunities to analyse data from some pupils who were not investing in their education and most of these (with the notable exceptions of Chris and Elma – see 6.3 and 8.5) came from working-class backgrounds.

The evidence from the study suggests that disaffected pupils will primarily face issues of motivation and engagement in regard to the Requirement, and issues of their linguistic output are likely to be secondary. Whilst the pupils at Shadow High did not

complete the study, they provided enough evidence to suggest that they were the least conformist group. Although some of this group were timid, many more were provocative (see 5.3.2). Their approach to the naming exercise, in which they chose controversial names, and the taboo nature of Jooky's conversational topics showed both an in-group focus and an out-group hostility which is typical of disaffected pupils. This was the only bottom-set group I recruited and the difficulties I had in getting them to buy into the study suggests a link between academic ability, investment and engagement.

In a hierarchy of non-conformism, the next group to stand out were the boys from Mill Town High, another working-class school with a very tight geographical catchment area. As with the Shadow High pupils, some of these boys ignored the prompts I gave them and were focused on their own in-group rather than on the task they had been asked to do. The presentations comprising entirely of football chants and counter-chants show this most strikingly. These pupils also failed to complete the questionnaires as requested and this offers further evidence that they were not motivated to adhere to the requirements of the task. At Valley Wide High, there wasn't the same level of in-group bonding or out-group animosity although three boys, Albert, Costineto and Daniel, frequently displayed nonconformist attitudes.

The reason that many of the Mill Town boys were more in-group focused than Valley Wide High boys could be because of their tighter geographical social networks. Valley Wide High pupils were drawn from across a relatively wide geographical area. For example, Costineto, Albert and Daniel all lived in different towns up to six miles apart, giving them limited scope to socialise together after school. At Shadow High and Mill Town High this wasn't the case and the school catchment area were made up of only a few square miles.

It seems clear from this evidence that set (top, middle or bottom) is an important variable in regard to attitude to school and, to some extent, this is what might be expected. Many of the bottom-set Shadow High pupils find themselves in an educational competition they cannot win and they are cast as failures in the system. Their parents are statistically much more likely to come from working-class backgrounds with no experience of educational success or corresponding wealth and status. In their position, their options are to accept a low-status position in the school hierarchy or to seek out arenas in which they can succeed. For some pupils, success within school will come through being gifted sports people, musicians or artists. But for a small number of pupils whose skills are not valued in school – which could include mechanically gifted pupils or potential skilled craftsmen with profiles like Daniel’s (see 8.4) – their opportunities for constructing positive identities with high status within the school culture appear extremely low. In response, some pupils will have clustered together to form in-groups with nonconformist cultures. Within these groups, identities will be formed in which the school is an out-group to be challenged. Here, success (which is otherwise elusive) can be achieved by being the most verbose in the class, the most disruptive or the most outrageous, and these traits were evident among some of the pupils in this study, such as Costineto, Daniel, Rose and Sooky.

In terms of how the Requirement would affect these disaffected working-class pupils, I am not sure that it would unfairly impact on them. It didn’t seem likely that these pupils would be concerned about any negative outcomes as a result of their home dialect because they didn’t respect the authority of the school.

In 8.5, I discussed the use of taboo language and it was the disaffected working-class pupils, being heavily peer-group focused, who were the most likely group to use it. In

this situation, these pupils create the potential for conflict because teachers are always likely to challenge instances of taboo language in the classroom.

In regard to the use of low-prestige speech variables, the Requirement has the potential to exacerbate the conflict between teachers and disaffected pupils by highlighting a further distinction between the in- and out-group (the language they use) but I would argue that the use of nonstandard grammatical constructions would be unlikely to be the main source of negative evaluations from teachers; a reluctance to adhere to instructions, a lack of planning and poor engagement with the task would all be more likely to be issues of concern. But it is difficult to say whether this impression would have been much better had these pupils managed to avoid low-prestige speech features. This means that the Requirement would have a low impact on disaffected pupils.

10.2.4 The ‘middle-majority’

In this study, there was a middle-majority of pupils who were from working-class backgrounds and who neither excelled at school nor rejected the values of the school. Bradley, Isabella, Abe, Harriet, Wendy and many other pupils made a good effort in the study without particularly standing out. I would argue that they can only suffer through the Requirement. In order to achieve the highest grades, these pupils must speak SE but, as shown throughout this study, this can be difficult. In the Pennine-mid group, there was scope for working-class pupils to construct a wider range of identities because the school has a wider social intake of pupils, and this is reflected in the wider range of hobbies and interests they named and the higher number of extracurricular activities they took part in. On average, they used a higher proportion of high-prestige features compared to the mid-set pupils at the working-class schools, giving them more

scope to remain within the wider linguistic norms of their more diverse peer-group whilst also reducing the risk of being marked down for using low-prestige variants.

But for the middle-majority in the working-class schools, opportunities for the construction of diverse identities were curtailed by the narrow prevailing norms, which were less pro-school than they were at Pennine High, and by the requirement for pupils to be authentic. The examples of Harriet, Freya and Pancake show that when members of these groups were relaxed or excited, they used the highest number of localised features and this presents them with a dilemma: they can maintain a high level of formality, which will lead to style-shifting towards high-prestige features, or they can speak passionately, excitedly and fluently, in which case they are likely to use a higher number of localised features. In both instances, there will be a potential detrimental impact on the assessment of their presentation – it can either lack passion or lack standardness.

Pupils in these schools were unable to shake off the speech features which indexed their local community ties and this leaves them exposed to being marked down. These pupils face the same dilemma as aspirational pupils – they can accommodate to the school or to their friends – but whereas this may be a finely balanced judgment for aspirational pupils who can see a direct benefit by accommodating to the school, it is more likely to feel like ‘Hobson’s Choice’ for this middle-majority of working-class pupils: the potential risks of stirring up animosity by adopting high-prestige features, the loss of naturalness which can come from this (as shown by the examples of hypercorrect-/h/) and the lack of authenticity which would be involved in speaking SE is likely to carry much more weight than the chance to achieve higher marks on the S&L.

10.2.5 The ‘boys problem’ revisited

One of the clearest findings in the study was that both socially and linguistically, working-class boys were likely to be the single group hit the hardest by the Requirement. Whilst there were many conformist, working-class girls in the study, among the boys only Evan and Bradley presented consistently pro-school identities. All six Mill Town boys and five of the seven Valley Wide High boys were either heavily in-group focused (and engaged in banter with their friends), failed to conform to the requirements of the tasks or described taking part in anti-social behaviour during their presentations.

As discussed in 2.3, there are pressures faced by working-class boys which could leave them particularly vulnerable in regard to the affiliations and aspirations they are likely to develop and how these can bring them into conflict with the school. Industrial changes have eroded the identities typically constructed by males: manufacturing and skilled labour jobs, once the staple occupations for working-class men, have been in decline for over thirty years. Social changes mean that the personal attributes once coveted by men, such as physical fitness, mental toughness and directness, are no longer valued as they once were. Moreover, the personal attributes valued in educational contexts – ‘soft skills’ such as being a good listener and showing empathy – are more typically accepted as ‘feminine’ traits in many working-class communities. As discussed in 2.4, boys can be motivated by a desire not to appear feminine and, therefore, could avoid displays of these ‘soft skills’.

Culturally, working-class boys are likely to have a narrower range of behavioural norms than girls – as well as having more limited scope for deviation from those norms than girls. The prevailing culture among working-class boys is less likely to be pro-school than for any other group.

The findings in regard to interests and hobbies show the narrow cultural norms available to boys in working-class areas – a narrowness which extended to issues of language use. Whilst Pennine-top boys engage in a variety of activities including football, mid-set boys, especially those of the working-class schools, tend not to deviate away from the group norms of football and Xbox – and many of them wrote ‘none’ when asked about interests and hobbies. The fact that almost every boy from working-class schools constructed identities in which football was so central gives an insight into the cultural limitations placed on them and the strength of the bonds that tie them.

Many of the working-class boys seem unconcerned with the potential rewards of engaging with a wide range of cultural practices – and just as importantly – to the benefits of being seen to engage (to support, for example, college applications). It is likely that they have not been exposed to the cultural capital invested by middle-class parents and, as a result, are blind to the possible advantages afforded through it.

Linguistically, studies show that, other things being equal, boys are likely to be less dextrous than girls, less sensitive to linguistic signals and less skilful in their manipulation of their linguistic repertoires (see 2.4). Added to this, they are in the throes of adolescence, with all its complexities, uncertainties and risks. All of these issues make it difficult for such boys to engage with the school and find the motivation to adhere to its norms, and this was evident in the linguistic choices made by the working-class boys in the study. Across the three phonetic features the distinction between boys and girls was clear with boys maintaining more low-prestige variants. /θ/-fronting, in particular, had a very big difference between boys and girls and this was the phonetic feature which was found to have some connotations with having a negative attitude to school. Boys also used more taboo features than girls. In regard to the

Requirement, this puts working-class boys at a bigger disadvantage than any other group because their strong in-group focus and their maintenance of localised speech features are likely to be negatively evaluated by teachers.

10.2.6 Exceptions to the rules

Whilst the data in this study showed a broad correlation between localised speech features and low levels of aspiration, it hid the exceptions to the rule at the top and bottom of the aspirational scale. The pupil who achieved the lowest score in the *aspiration* index was Gina. But Gina never dropped her /h/s throughout her presentations; nor did Faye who was also in the bottom 10 on the *aspiration* index. Albert and Barry also had very low scores on the *aspiration* index but had high percentages for some or all of the phonetic features.

More seriously however, Josie was among the most aspirational of pupils, scoring 95% on the index, but her speech pattern was more similar to that of the lower quintile with particularly low scores for /θ/s and /t/s. Josie had a *home culture* score 20% lower than her group average (Pennine-top girls). But she works hard in class and wants to be a lawyer when she completes university.

Similarly, Pancake was embedded in a solidly working-class area in a northern mill town. She achieved a very high score on the *aspiration* index but maintained a range of localised speech features: she had some of the lowest scores for the three phonetic variables. Although her parents did not have professional occupations (they were a lorry driver and shelf stacker), she scored highly on the *home culture* index, showing that her parents place a high value on education. As well as her heavy use of the localised accent features shown above, Pancake had local dialect features scattered throughout her speech: she often dropped the definite article and replaced *was* with

were. But Pancake was one of the most fluent and articulate speakers in the study and her presentations were original and thoughtful.

These are conscientious pupils with very good attitudes to school and yet their localised speech features leave them open to negative evaluations by teachers who might be minded to focus on low-status features at the expense of the more positive aspects of the identities being constructed. The confusion between standardness and formality (see 1.4) will lead some teachers to link nonstandardness to informality and to misinterpret the speech styles of Josie and Pancake as being inappropriately informal, leading to the possibility of them being marked down.

10.2.7 Summary of RQ2

The main beneficiaries of the Requirement are most likely to be middle-class pupils. These pupils already speak SE and are therefore free to make their classroom presentations in their home dialect. Working-class pupils need to change their dialect in order to succeed in S&L tasks but they often find it difficult to do this in front of their peers.

In this study, social class background gave a strong steer towards a pupil's attitude to school although there were always pupils who bucked the trends of their group. But the analysis also shows that the standard-nonstandard dichotomy pales into the background when placed in the wider context of the presentations. Identities are forged through clusters of speech features, which combine to trigger evaluative judgments and working-class pupils have a rich stock of linguistic resources at their disposal which they can skilfully interweave to create the identity they are looking for (see 10.1).

However, these identities are constructed within constraints and different school cultures allowed different amounts of freedom. Working-class pupils at Pennine High had a wider range of linguistic options open to them because the school norms take in a broader mix of pupils, leading to a more diverse range of speech styles. As working-class pupils at this school negotiate their position in the school, those who may be aspirational are able to locate themselves within a middle-class friendship group, enabling them to adopt the behavioural, attitudinal and linguistic norms of the group.

For pupils at the working-class schools there was a much narrower range of possibilities. At these schools, there appeared to be fewer options for the construction of aspirational identities, leaving pupils such as Evan and Freya isolated. Disaffected pupils at these schools, such as Albert and Daniel, had similar attitudes to Willis's 'Lads'; they were peer-group focused and seemed unconcerned by the requirements of the school.

For the majority of working-class pupils who had a conscientious approach to school, the Requirement left them exposed to the possible prejudices of teachers who place a high value on spoken SE. The features that gave these pupils their authentic voice could be interpreted as being inappropriately informal, leading to them being marked down.

The biggest problem was that when working-class pupils became more relaxed or excited, they used the highest number of low-prestige features and this will have a direct detrimental impact on the marks achieved. The passion shown by Harriet, which was accompanied by a shift towards low-status speech features, could result in her being marked down in her presentations and, I would argue, that makes the Requirement socially biased.

10.3RQ3: What changes should be made, if any, to the National Curriculum in regard to the requirements for spoken SE?

In Chapters 1 and 2 I set out the narrative in which the Requirement is located. The prevailing political ideology leads to an insistence that all pupils should aspire to achieve social mobility and affords little or no value to working-class lifestyles. This view legitimises the Requirement because, it says, if pupils are unable to adopt spoken SE they will face discrimination and will be unable to achieve their full potential. In this thesis, I have challenged this narrative and argued that the Requirement is anachronistic and socially biased. It is anachronistic because social shifts over the past few decades have eroded the conditions in which a pro-SE ideology can exist. The authoritarian cultures which facilitated an insistence on formal SE have given way to more liberal, informal and diverse norms, as evidenced by the rise of soft skills and the social trend towards informalisation. A social drive towards a fairer and more tolerant society (in response to the UK's poor record of social mobility) has prompted activities from all political parties to promote equality and diversity. Where discrimination on grounds of social class exists, there is an expectation that it must be challenged, as shown by the report into elite City of London law firms. The Requirement is socially biased because SE is a middle-class dialect and its promotion therefore favours pupils from middle-class backgrounds. The findings of this study show that middle-class pupils are much more likely to have the high-prestige features promoted through the Requirement. Working-class pupils, as well as having nonstandard features as their home dialect, also have to negotiate the need to be authentic with the need to style-shift out of their home dialects. The pressures of living in dense, multiplex networks mean that this can be insurmountable.

So what should be done? In responding to this RQ I will discuss the ideological approach taken by other researchers before outlining my own position. The pros and cons of the status quo are discussed before alternatives are offered.

10.3.1 Ideological standpoint

Before setting out the actions that I believe this research suggests would help to create a fairer system, I will discuss the ideological motivations which will inevitably influence my approach to this study. A researcher's world view, formed through their life experiences, will always shape their approach to their work and, I would argue, this can be a good thing because it can facilitate a passionate and thorough critique of their area of interest. That said, there is always a risk that an ideological standpoint can cloud judgments and care must be taken to keep an open mind as far as possible.

In Chapter 1, I outlined the circumstances in which the Requirement became embedded in the education system and was critical of the authoritarian approaches that motivated the decisions made by policy makers at that time. In doing this, I aligned myself with the libertarian opposition to the Requirement. I believe that respect should be afforded to the nonstandard accents and dialects that pupils bring to school from their homes and communities because I live in one of those communities and understand the attachments people have to them. But in my critique of the political motivations which brought about the Requirement, I also aligned myself against the right-wing end of the political spectrum. My views are motivated by my own experiences. Specifically, my affiliation to socialist values are drawn from my time working in factories and in other low-skilled occupations where I learnt the value of front line workers to the success of any venture. This value so often seemed underappreciated or even ignored by those in authority, and, at its worst, it stripped workers of their autonomy – and of their dignity and respect. As

a project manager at Royal Mail, one of the most rewarding projects I worked on was designed to tap into the expertise of the front line workers and it was a privilege to experience the culture change this shift cultivated. These workers, once empowered and given some autonomy to influence their work spaces, flourished and gained in confidence – to the benefit of the individuals and the work place. In the educational context, I feel the same way. Authoritarian attitudes (and the systems and structures such attitudes give rise to) which discriminate against particular social groups can contribute to feelings of marginalisation and exclusion.

10.3.2 Previous researchers

It seems that many sociolinguists and educationalists also believe that dignity and respect should be afforded to pupils from working-class communities but, when it comes to finding solutions to the problem of language prescription and the offering counter-arguments to the promotion of a discriminatory language ideology, many of these researchers hold views that I do not share. Although these researchers often argue that care must be taken when discussing the status of NSDs, their narrative often falls into the aspiration imperative trap and, rather than challenging this, they argue that nonstandard speaking pupils need to be able to adopt spoken SE. For example, according to Bolander and Watts (2009: 146), both Labov and Bernstein ‘argue that all school children should have access to the language of the educational system, which is, in both cases, a form of standard English.

Clarke et al (2004: 171) state that:

The onus is upon the teacher to discover ways of having pupils employ standard forms of speech willingly enough.

Cheshire (2005) states:

It might be thought that the main issue for the classroom would be how best to teach the standard to speakers of nonstandard varieties.

Hudley and Mallinson (2011: 6), whose book is aimed at educating teachers about the richness of NSDs (albeit in a US context) argue that:

Students fare better in life socially, academically and professionally when they learn standardized [spoken] English *and* when they continue developing their home language varieties (their italics),

while Kerswill (2013) says:

I'm keen to understand why some young people are failing to get a good education and failing to get good jobs, and *I have always believed that the use of Standard English is part of the solution ... For some purposes, [young people] need Standard English* and an avoidance of slang (my italics).

When I read such sentiments, I intuitively feel that they would not be shared by most of the working-class people I work and live alongside. Firstly, I believe they would only apply to working-class people who aspire to achieve social mobility. Pupils who want to remain within working-class communities as adults (which, given the low social mobility figures in Britain, will be the majority) will, in my experience, rarely, if ever, be expected to adopt spoken SE: the idea that builders, nurses, etc. would ever be expected to adopt spoken SE – or would even contemplate it – seems bizarre. Secondly, there is evidence to contradict the belief that the inability to adopt spoken SE is a bar to achieving social advancement, such as the example of Lord Sugar and some of his ‘apprentices’ discussed in 1.5 (not to mention my own personal experience). And

thirdly, in the rare environments where such prejudice does appear to affect the prospects of people from lower socioeconomic groups, they appear outdated and discriminatory as shown by the attitudes of the City law firm discussed in 1.4.2.

I would argue that the correct response when confronted by these attitudes is not to appease them but to challenge them and to educate those who hold them.

But my discomfort with these sentiments shows that any solutions to this problem are inevitably built on ideological standpoints. My own ideology conforms to Jones' belief that dignity and respect should be afforded to working-class occupations and communities (see 2.2). My solutions are built on a belief that schools should have a role in challenging the aspiration imperative and promoting a wider diversity of outcomes for young people (such as those offered to German pupils via the vocational schools route discussed in 2.1) – but this is highly unlikely given the constant demands for better academic results. My view is that pupils should be taught to have pride in their backgrounds rather than feel a sense of failure if they want to remain close to their working-class roots. There will be pupils who aspire to achieve social mobility of course, and the same respect and dignity should be afforded to these pupils too – but the promotion of such attitudes must not be compulsory, as I believe it is in schools today.

10.3.3 Areas for action

In looking for ways to improve the situation for working-class pupils within education, there are three areas which could be changed to make the system fairer for pupils from working-class backgrounds:

1. Strive for a cultural shift within schools and education policy towards affording respect and dignity for working-class occupations, communities and linguistic practices, reflected in educational narratives and in education policy
2. Refocus the educational narrative away from standardness onto appropriateness
3. Educate teachers to recognise the issues which prevent pupils from style-shifting towards formal prestige features

In terms of the first point, some recent innovations presented opportunities to bring about the necessary cultural shift within schools and education policy towards affording respect and dignity towards working-class occupations and communities. For example, the Investigating Spoken English module (discussed in 1.2) provided the opportunity for pupils from working-class backgrounds to develop a sense of pride in their home dialect. As an English teacher, I saw first-hand the empowering effect this had on pupils as they explored their own speech and the values embedded within it. For pupils such as Pancake and Josie, this module could give them the courage to feel confident about the speech features that index the values embedded in their communities and to challenge the view that having localised speech features and being conscientious and aspirational are mutually exclusive. But the module has been discarded as part of the move away from modular assessments. However, if the learning points from the module can be prominently integrated into the course-final English GCSE syllabus, then the advantages may not be lost.

The removal of the marks for S&L from overall GCSE marks is a mixed blessing: it means that pupils will not suffer in their overall marks for using nonstandard features but it leaves the Requirement intact and, therefore, the messages passed to pupils from teachers will still promote spoken SE. I think the assessments for S&L should remain a part of the overall marks but that the focus on spoken SE should be removed from the

criteria. References to spoken SE should not come into the mark scheme at all, although issues around standardness could be explored as part of the module discussed above. Guidance should highlight more holistic issues, such as structure, articulacy, coherence and appropriateness, rather than standardness.

However, issues around ‘appropriacy’ have proved to be controversial, particularly in the US. For example, Lippi-Green (2012) criticises the concept of ‘appropriacy’ in US schools where it has been used to suggest that nonstandard speech should be deemed inappropriate in formal situations. She suggests that policies promoting ‘appropriacy’ have (by deeming nonstandard speech inappropriate) promulgated the belief that:

certain vernacular varieties of U.S. English should be restricted to the home and neighborhood, to play and informal situations, to the telling of folktales and stories of little or no interest to the wider world (Lippi-Green, 2012: 82).

One of the problems is that in the US, ‘appropriacy’ is inextricably tied into the highly emotive debates between Labov and US educational researchers influenced by the work of Bernstein in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Bolander and Watts believe that some educational psychologists in the US, particularly Jensen (1968, cited in Bolander and Watts, 2009: 156-157), used Bernstein’s writings on ‘elaborated’ and ‘restricted’ speech codes (discussed in 2.4) to justify ‘compensatory education’ policies which were designed to ‘correct’ the deficit they felt were blighting the chances of pupils from the lowest socioeconomic groups. Part of their solutions to this perceived deficit was to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate language use, with localised speech styles being deemed inappropriate. Labov (1970)

successfully challenged these views in *The Logic of Nonstandard English* but Bernstein's name became synonymous with an extreme version of the deficit view of working-class speech styles. For example, Lippi-Green (2012: 84) says that:

In Bernstein's view, children who do not speak [standard American English] do not possess sufficient human language to think or reason, and must be helped to overcome these language and cultural handicaps.

As a result of the Labov-Bernstein clashes, the term 'appropriacy' has, for some, accrued negative connotations. And embedded within this notion of 'appropriacy' is the type of conflation of dialect (or, accent, in the US context given by Lippi-Green) and formality which I highlighted in 1.4.1.

This is not how I intend to use the term. For me, language can be *appropriate but nonstandard* and in 1.4.2 I gave several examples where language has been accepted as such, including the language of football commentators and business people. In the examples I gave, speech was accepted as being appropriately formal without being standard and this is the situation which should be promoted in our schools. Where children are speaking formally, with clarity and with lexical accuracy, then to deem their speech style inappropriate because it includes nonstandard features is socially biased and, as discussed in 1.2, is likely to be ideologically motivated.

For these reasons, I suggest that the phrase 'appropriately formal' could be used to encompass formal language which may or may not include nonstandard localised speech features. Although this represents a shift to a vaguer term – and I have spoken about the problems of definition which currently plague spoken SE – it avoids the issues

around ‘appropriacy’ which can have negative connotations associated with the Labov-Berstein debate. This phrase isn’t ideal because it does not overcome the issues around subjectivity, and the distinctions between ‘formally appropriate’ and ‘standardly appropriate’ will be lost of many teachers, given the discussion in 1.4. But, fundamentally, the term ‘appropriately formal’ would remove the focus on the standard-nonstandard dichotomy which divides social classes, legitimises social bias and affords an advantage to middle-class pupils over working-class pupils.

Rather than promoting capitulation in the face of discrimination (as the current NC does), the NC should have a role in educating pupils about the potential for dialect discrimination and in giving them the confidence to challenge it. We would not expect our schools to encourage someone who is gay or Jewish to hide traces of their identity in order to avoid being discriminated against; but that is exactly what the current education policy does in regard to dialect discrimination. Where the last bastions of overt discrimination are found, such as the law firm discussed in 1.4, we should be giving young people the confidence to challenge them rather than telling them that they - the victims - must accommodate to those who would discriminate against them.

The changes outlined above would ensure that the NC is not systematically socially biased against working-class pupils and it would help to level the playing field between them and their middle-class counterparts a little bit. These changes would remove the opportunity for socially-biased teachers to penalise working-class pupils for maintaining their home dialects during classroom presentation.

10.3.4 Remaining issues

However, even if these changes were made, there would remain some issues which complicate any solution. Firstly, there is the complex relationship between

standardness, formality and diversity. In my data, whenever a NSD speaker was deemed to have become more formal, they had become more standard. The impact of this on teachers is likely to blur the lines between the two and lead to the interpretation of nonstandard speech as informal. In this scenario, teachers may feel justified in ‘correcting’ what they see as inappropriately informal speech.

In response, I would argue that there is a need to educate teachers about the role of nonstandard speech in the identities these pupils construct so they are better able to understand the social and cultural constraints in which pupils speak. If teachers understood that such speech forms were an important component in the need to achieve authenticity, they would be better placed to assess the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the speech features being used. Part of the solution to this problem might be to try to differentiate between formality and diversity. I speak with a Lancashire dialect but, when necessary, my lexis and grammar are appropriately formal. However, I still find myself in situations where professionals interpret my speech as being inappropriately informal because of my accent and dialect features. If we could educate professionals to accept a wider diversity of accents and dialects – as in the case of the Jamaican continuity announcer discussed in 1.4 – then these situations might not occur. I concede that this isn’t straightforward and the links between standardness, formality and diversity in the context of contemporary English society need to be studied and understood in much more detail than they are at present.

The second issue is that there are undoubtedly times when pupils will deviate away from standard speech as acts of disaccommodation, and in these instances, it would be appropriate for the teacher to challenge them. Cheshire noted that some of the boys in her study increased their use of nonstandard forms in the classroom with teachers they

didn't like (see 2.4.2). In this present study, there was limited evidence of pupils using linguistic disaccommodation but where they did occur, they were not marked most strongly by the use of grammatical variables as much as through identity performance; such as Elma's and Jooky's use of taboo language, Rose's reluctance to put any effort into her LLs and, to a lesser extent, Daniel S's complaint about a boring lesson.

Where the use of nonstandard features is benign, I believe they should be accepted because they protect the authentic voice of the speaker; but where they may be part of a strategy designed to show impoliteness or rudeness, they must be challenged. However, interpretations about such impoliteness/rudeness are subjective and are influenced by complex intentions and interpretations which make it difficult to be clear about which speech features should and shouldn't be challenged. Whilst this standpoint is fraught with issues of subjective interpretation, that is the reality of all classroom interactions and of power dynamics more generally.

The wider solution here would be for sociolinguists to instigate training for teachers and educationalists. Christine Mallinson (2013) offers such training courses for US teachers (although, as discussed above, I do not share her overall ideological standpoint). She puts together training workshops which are offered to education authorities on commercial terms: education authorities 'buy in' training packages designed to educate their teaching staff. These are designed to equip teachers to make appropriate judgments in the types of situations described above and I think there is a need for similar workshops to be offered in England.

But as well as offering training at a local level, it seems to me that the voice of the sociolinguists has not been loud enough at the policy level in the British parliament. When I made an FOI request asking for evidence in support of the Requirement, the

response didn't name any sociolinguists. The only reference I could find to current sociolinguists was a citation of work by Julia Snell which was offered by Prof Robin Alexander, who isn't a sociolinguist. I think there is a need for sociolinguists to be at the forefront of this debate and to take on the responsibility to educate decision makers at the policy level and to take the lead in matters of English language education right through to teachers and pupils.

10.4 Final comments

In this thesis, I have argued that the Requirement was pushed through for ideological reasons (see 1.2) and that its implementation was not evidence based (see 1.4). I showed that defining spoken SE is highly problematic, leaving many teachers unsure about what it is and isn't SE. Teachers, not surprisingly in the absence of clear guidelines, fall back to their own ideological position and, for some, this entails a motivation to 'correct' nonstandard speech because they think it is deficient. There is little or no evidence to suggest that the Requirement has been successful. Social and workplace cultural shifts have resulted in a greater tolerance of linguistic diversity over recent decades; and issues of fairness have led to a belief that opportunities for social advancement should be afforded to a wider social range than was previously the case. The claim that certain situations 'demand' spoken SE was challenged by evidence showing that only a small minority of people feel they have been discriminated against because of their accents) and I have argued that the correct response to dialect discrimination is to challenge those who would discriminate rather than to ask their victims to change the way they speak. I challenged the 'aspiration imperative' to suggest that it is based on the premise that working-class occupations and communities are deficient and that pupils must be encouraged to 'escape' their working-class roots. The results from the data showed that linguistic variation encompasses a much wider

array of forms than the simplistic standard-nonstandard dichotomy and I showed that people are under pressure to conform to in-group linguistic norms in order to conform to the requirement for authenticity.

One of the most frustrating aspects of this debate is that it takes place exclusively among middle-class SE speakers. Working-class people voiceless in the debate. But their children are told that success in life depends, among other things, on their ability to be able to adopt a speech style used by a different group of people. For someone like me, deeply embedded in a tight-knit working-class community, the idea of adopting spoken SE is no more realistic than it would be to ask professors to adopt a strong Lancashire dialect if they came to teach at a Lancashire University.

But, as my research progressed, I came to realise that the Requirement is only one manifestation of a much wider ideology which seems to be systematically undermining working-class communities and life-styles. The Requirement to speak SE is in tune with the aspiration imperative and the narrative which tells us that we must all aspire to achieve social mobility and escape an impoverished life among the working-classes. This narrative has stripped away the dignity and respect once afforded to working-class communities and attempts to bestow on those who fail to climb the social ladder a sense of failure.

And so, any solution to the problems created by the Requirement must be rooted in an alternative ideology; and in this thesis I have tried to root my suggestions in the ideology promoted by, among others, Owen Jones. He argues that our national narrative should refocus on how we can improve conditions in working-class communities, rather than how people can escape them and my proposed solutions tie into this bigger picture. By educating teachers to understand the constraints that

maintain nonstandard speech, by educating pupils to be proud of their heritage, by removing the legitimisation of bigotry based on social class and by empowering pupils to challenge such bigotry, the English NC can play a small part in correcting the damaging narrative which has undermined the confidence of working-class pupils and cast them as failures.

The requirement for working-class pupils to adopt spoken SE is a tyranny and as CS Lewis⁴¹ said:

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive ... those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.

10.4.1 Limitations

Although the study was successful in answering the RQs, there were many lessons to be learned through the way it was planned and deployed. In this section, I will discuss issues raised through the use of mixed methods, problems around the social indices, issues around the method designed to explore identity, issues around the participant population and issues around attempting to elicit authentic presentations.

In 4.1, I discussed the issues raised when trying to balance qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a single study and I'm not sure that I've been successful in achieving this balance. The social indices would have been much more robust had the questionnaires been completed by a much higher number of participants (ie. many hundreds) but at the planning stage I thought I had enough participants and enough statements in each social index to generate such robust results. However, at each step

⁴¹ www.quotationspage.com/quote/33029.html

of the process, statements fell away and then participants fell away until the numbers remaining were on the edge of acceptable. In regard to the statements, I started off with over eighty but some were rejected following pre-testing (ie. when they were found to be misunderstood) and others were rejected after quantification when they were found not to be working correctly (ie. when they were found not to be teasing pupils apart) until I was left with over thirty. Some participants were found to be providing highly inconsistent responses in their questionnaires whilst others were left out of the quantitative analysis because they were outliers in their group.

The social indices generated a vast amount of work in the study. The generation of the statements, indices and questionnaires was very labour-intensive. The wording of the statements presented many challenges and at the end of it, there remained many uncontrolled variables, such as mood and subjective interpretation. The quantification of the results required a spreadsheet which also took a lot of development and which required ongoing tweaks and amendments. And in the end, I'm not sure that the effort was worth it because the most interesting aspects of the results were often found in the qualitative analysis.

At the outset, I expected the issue of identity load to be the biggest factor at play but this wasn't the case. In my original conception of the methodology, the inclusion of middle-class pupils was not envisaged to play an important part in the study and they were seen almost as a control group which could be used to provide a base against which working-class practices could be contrasted. But the middle-class pupils proved to be very interesting in their own right and as the study progressed it seemed that the broad differences between the social groups, alongside issues of identity load, were among the most salient recurring themes.

The locations chosen for the study – along the Lancashire/Yorkshire border – have strong and distinct accents and dialects and proud heritages, meaning that the speech communities will have a sense of pride built into them which may not be evident in other parts of the country. For example, county pride is unlikely to be evident among the residents of Middlesex. This means that the results cannot be taken as representative of the wider population.

The study focused on a narrow band within the overall pupil population. The middle-class pupils in the study attend comprehensive rather than private schools; their attitudes will be influenced by their interaction with other pupils from broader social classes and this will have shaped their responses. At the other end of the educational engagement scale, the methodology was unsuccessful in motivating pupils from the bottom set to engage and participate. This left a middle band only. That said, the fact that differences were evident among this narrow group shows that the issues explored here are more likely to be even greater across the broader social landscape than I have found.

Although the hypothesis that HLs would generate more restricted speech than LLs was broadly correct, it proved to be an oversimplification because I underestimated the extent to which pupils would invest different amounts of their identities within both HLs and LLs.

The presentations were not carried out in an authentic classroom setting and this is likely to have impacted on the results. In particular, I cannot be sure that the pupils who used taboo language would have done so had their usual English teacher have been

carrying out the study. Nonetheless, the results are comparable because all pupils made their presentations under the same conditions.

Despite these methodological challenges, the study has been successful in highlighting the issues faced by working-class pupils when making classroom presentations. The one-minute presentation method proved a very efficient way to elicit the largest amount of speech in the littlest amount of time. The sessions were effective in balancing the need to replicate the authentic classroom whilst being different enough to entice pupils into taking part. The quantitative methods did provide important pointers for further analysis and generated relatively robust and comparable data. And the presentations generated a very rich mine for qualitative analysis.

10.4.2 Further studies

The study raised several sociolinguistic issues which warrant further investigation. The construction of the *community embeddedness* index proved interesting because some of the original statements probed attitudes to the communities, as well as depth of embeddedness in them. The concept of ‘covert prestige’ discussed in 3.4 leads to the presumption that people embedded in working-class communities feel a greater allegiance to them than do middle-class people (although in a review of his earlier work Labov, 2006: 402, states that ‘covert prestige’, whilst evident in middle-class speakers, ‘disappeared for those at the lower end of the social scale’). There is often a general assumption that people in working-class communities like their communities more than other social groups. But this wasn’t the case in this study. When pupils were presented with statements such as ‘I love living around here’, middle-class pupils gave more positive responses than working-class pupils. I would have liked to have explored this more in this thesis but that wasn’t possible within the word count.

The relationship between standardness and formality also needs further investigation if we are to understand the complexities around subjective interpretations of them made by gate-keepers such as teachers and employers.

I think there is also work to do on identifying the trajectory of social changes in attitudes to NSDs. The media offer conflicting views about whether pro-prescriptive or pro-tolerant views are in the ascendance. There will inevitably be polarised views at the extremes but where do the middle-majority sit? It is important to understand this issue because if the trajectory is towards tolerance, then this further weakens the arguments in favour of prescription. But if it is towards prescription, then, I would argue, sociolinguists need to work harder to get the evidence out there and to get their message across.

In addition to these areas of interest, I feel that the wealth of data I gathered is still relatively untapped. During transcription, I marked many features which haven't been fully explored here. For example, the use of banter (What is the gender split? What is its function?) and the use of opening and closing salutations (Who uses formal salutations and when? Who uses informal ones? Are there differences between them?). There is also work to do on the word environments which might affect the use of one variable over another. Previous researchers (e.g. Moore) have found word environments to be interesting variables but they were outside of the scope of this study.

As this project developed, it became apparent that many of the ideological issues were sociological, not sociolinguistic, and these warrant further exploration. For example, the pressures which appear to constrain the options for working-class boys in terms of their cultural intake was an interesting finding and it would be worth pursuing this

further. Additionally, the prevailing narrative around working-class communities and occupations draws on a deficit model and I think that the attitudes which promote the aspiration imperative need to be challenged.

So although this study has provided interesting and revealing evidence about how language is used in the construction of identities during classroom presentations, it has much more still to give.

ABBREVIATIONS

- HL: High Load voice (presentations where voice has high self-identity load – when pupils are speaking as themselves)
- LL: Low Load voice (presentations where voice has low self-identity load – when pupils are playing a role)
- NC: National Curriculum
- NSD(s): Nonstandard dialect(s)
- RQ: Research Question
- SE: Standard English
- SGD: Small Group Discussions
- SIT: Social Identity Theory

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Freedom of Information request made on 26th July 2013

[submitted online] I would like to make an FOI request regarding the 'National Curriculum consultation – Framework Document' issued by the Department for Education this year

The 'Remit for Review of the National Curriculum in England' section of the department's website states that: 'The Secretary of State has also asked Mr Tim Oates to lead an Expert Panel that will provide an evidence base for the review and will ensure that the construction and content of the new National Curriculum is based in evidence and informed by international best practice.' From the framework document, it is clear that references to the need for spoken standard English have been strengthened in the new curriculum. Below are the key quotes from the National Curriculum documents of 1999, 2007 and 2013.

- 1999 Pupils should be taught to use the vocabulary, structures and grammar of spoken standard English fluently and accurately in informal and formal situations (DfEE, 1999: 32)
- 2007 Pupils should be able to ... vary vocabulary, structures and grammar to convey meaning, including speaking standard English fluently (QCDA, 2007: 64)
- 2013 Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using standard English (DfE, 2013: 10) [in] formal and informal contexts (p52)

Between 1999 and 2007, references to a requirement to speak standard English 'informally' were dropped but have been reinstated in the new document.

My FOI request is as follows:

Please can you provide me with the 'evidence base' for the decision to strengthen references to spoken standard English?

Response received on 21st August 2013

Dear Shaun,

Thank you for your email dated 26 July 2013 requesting information about the evidence base that informed Ministers' decisions to strengthen references to spoken standard English in the national curriculum framework document published by the Department on 8 July 2013. I have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

There are two key sources of evidence that helped Ministers to make decisions about the treatment of spoken language within the new national

curriculum. The first of these is the report of the expert panel appointed by the Secretary of State to advise the national curriculum review (*Framework for the national curriculum: a report by the expert panel for the national curriculum review*), published in December 2011. The panel firmly concludes, based on the evidence that they had considered (sources referenced in the report) that spoken language development should be part of the new national curriculum. You can find the panel's report at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175439/NCR-Expert_Panel_Report.pdf.

The second key piece of evidence that was considered was the submission made to the Department by Professor Robin Alexander (Fellow of Wolfson College at the University of Cambridge, Professor of Education Emeritus at the University of Warwick and Chair of the Cambridge Primary Education Review), based on a presentation that he delivered at the Department in February 2012. You can see a transcript of Professor Alexander's presentation (again including references) here:

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/_news/2012/02/2012_02_20DfE_oracy_Alexander.pdf

The Department does hold additional information relating to the treatment of spoken language in the new national curriculum in the form of internal emails and other papers, and evidence submitted to the review by third parties. However, the Department estimates that the cost of identifying all the material in scope of your request would exceed the cost threshold applicable to central government. This is £600 and represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Act the Department is therefore not obliged to comply with your request and will not be processing it further.

We have considered ways in which your request might be narrowed or limited in order to reduce the cost of complying with it but have concluded that this is not possible. The reason for this is that we would need to ask all of the staff who have worked on the English curriculum since 2010 to go through their emails and documents covering the whole period of the review, to identify any that related to spoken language and then to consider whether they constituted evidence in scope of your request. I therefore do not consider that the Department would be able to provide the information you have requested without exceeding the cost limit.

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents produced by a government department or agency will be protected by Crown Copyright. Most Crown copyright information can be re-used under the Open Government Licence (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/>). For information about the OGL and about re-using Crown Copyright information please see The National Archives website - <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/uk-gov-licensing-framework.htm>.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled, you should make a complaint to the Department by writing to me within two calendar months of the date of this email. Your complaint will be considered by an independent review panel, who were not involved in the original consideration of your request.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint to the Department, you may then contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2013/0047506. If you need to respond to us, please visit: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, and quote your reference number.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Denham
Standards Division
Jo.DENHAM@education.gsi.gov.uk
www.education.gov.uk

Appendix B: Questionnaires

Appendix B (i): First session questionnaire

Name	School Year	Date				
How do you feel about these statements?						
	Disagree!	Agree!				
It is important to my family that I do well at school	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Someone at home encourages me to read books	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
I'm proud to live around here	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Lots of people around my area know my family	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
I behave badly in class	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Most teachers are really helpful	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Some teachers inspire me to try my best	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
I have no idea what I want to do with my life	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
The best ways to get rich is to get famous	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
I always wear a safety helmet when I cycle	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
It is important to be able to speak the right way	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Someone at home takes a keen interest in my school work	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
My parents know a lot of people near us	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Me and my friends like to roam around the streets in the evenings	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
When I'm older, I expect to do a job where you need to be clever	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Members of my family take me to the theatre, art galleries or museums...	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>...never</td> <td>...hardly ever</td> <td>...about once a year</td> <td>...a few times a year</td> </tr> </table>	...never	...hardly ever	...about once a year	...a few times a year	
...never	...hardly ever	...about once a year	...a few times a year			
Did your parents grow up around where you live now	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>Only one of my parents did</td> <td>Yes, both my parents did</td> </tr> </table>	No	Only one of my parents did	Yes, both my parents did		
No	Only one of my parents did	Yes, both my parents did				
How important are these things to you and your friends?						
	Not important	Very important				
Being able to attract boys/girls	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Being religious	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Being well mannered	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Causing trouble	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Wearing the right clothes	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					
Having plenty of money to spend	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔					

Appendix B (ii): Second session questionnaire

Name	School Year	Date
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How do you feel about these statements? Disagree! Agree!

No-one at home takes an interest in my school work	→	→	→	→	→	→
Most of my parents' friends live near us	→	→	→	→	→	→
Living around here is good	→	→	→	→	→	→
I'm well behaved in class	→	→	→	→	→	→
It's okay to bunk off school sometimes	→	→	→	→	→	→
School prepares you for your working life	→	→	→	→	→	→
I have goals in life that I want to achieve	→	→	→	→	→	→
The best ways to get rich is to work hard at school	→	→	→	→	→	→
I hate the way I speak	→	→	→	→	→	→
My friends try to do well at school	→	→	→	→	→	→

Do your parents have university degrees?

No

Only one of my
parents has

Yes, both my
parents have

What/who influences you most at school?

family, friends, teachers, your ambitions,
other? Put them in order of importance

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

**How important are these things to you
and your friends?**

Not
important

Very
important

Being good at computer games	→	→	→	→	→	→
Answering back to teachers	→	→	→	→	→	→
Rule breaking at school	→	→	→	→	→	→
Trying hard at in class	→	→	→	→	→	→
Respect for the police	→	→	→	→	→	→
Skill at fighting	→	→	→	→	→	→

Appendix B (iii): Back of second session questionnaire

Where do you like to sit in the classroom - front, middle back?	Why?
What clubs do you belong to (eg. kick boxing, Air Cadets)?	What are your hobbies and interests?
What do your parents/carers do for a living?	
Who? What words do they correct?	

Appendix B (iv): Third session questionnaire

Name	School Year	Date
How do you feel about these statements?		
Someone at home takes a keen interest in my school work	Disagree!	Agree!
My parents know a lot of people hear us		
I hate living around here		
My friends behave badly at school		
In school I just want to have a laugh with my friends		
I love school		
I always wear my full school uniform in the right way		
When I'm older, I expect to do a job where you need to be clever		
I just want to leave school as soon as I can		
I like the way I speak		
It is important to my family that I do well at school		
I'm proud to live around here		
I behave badly in class		
I have no idea what I want to do with my life		
How important are these things to you and your friends?		
Being kind to people	Not important	Very important
Being funny		
Being able to drink a lot of alcohol		
Being artistic		
Knowing about celebrities		
Smoking with friends		

Appendix B (v): Fourth session questionnaire

Name	School Year	Date
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How do you feel about these statements?	Disagree!	Agree!
Someone at home makes sure I do my homework	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Most of my family live near us	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
I want to stay around this area when I'm older	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Me and my friends like to roam around the streets in the evenings	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
My friends try to do well at school	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Most teachers try to make your life hell	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Some teachers help me to be a good person	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
If someone messes about in class you need to tell the teacher	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
When I'm older, I expect to do a job where you don't need to be clever	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
I need to do well at school if I'm going to achieve my ambitions	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
I enjoy giving classroom presentations	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
No-one at home takes an interest in my school work	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Most of my parents' friends live near us	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
My friends behave badly at school	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
I have goals in life that I want to achieve	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	

How important are these things to you and your friends?	Not important	Very important
Having lots of friends on Facebook	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Being popular	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Being good at business	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Being respectful to older people	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	
Knowing about politics and the world	➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔	

Appendix B (vi): Back of fourth session questionnaire

<p style="text-align: center;">After School Clubs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Underline what you do; Circle what you'd like to do</p>				
DVD Club	Trampolining	Boxing	Glee Club	Fitness Suite
Reading	Art Club	Creative Writing	Debating Club	Drama Club
Chess Club	Philosophy	Badminton	Film Club	Drumming
Survival skills	Football Training	Computer Club	Keyboard Club	Table Tennis
Newball	Cheer Leading	Rock Choir	Book Club	Climbing
Other (please state)				

Appendix C: List of SGD prompts

			
			
I'm a Celebrity or Big Brother?	Call of Duty: Black Ops or Battlefield: Bad Company 2?	"Girls are better than Boys"? do you agree? Why?	
McDonalds or Kentucky?	Who's in your family? What do they do for a living?	Eastenders or Coronation Street?	
Harry Potter or Twilight?	Britain's Got Talent or X-Factor?	What are your favourite lessons? What do you like about them?	
Talk about your first day at school.	What's facebook good for? Give an example of how you use it.	Hannah Montana or The Suite Life of Zac and Cody?	
360, PS3 or Wii?	What's the best football team and why?	What do you do on an average night?	
 or 	How do most people get rich - work hard at school or get famous?	What's there to do around this area?	
What should be done with  precinct?	"There's more to do in Hassy than  " - do you agree?	Which mobile phone is the best? What can you do with it?	
What do you hope to do when you leave education?	What activities should the school offer outside of lessons?	Where's the best place to go on holiday? Why?	

Appendix D: Rationale for HL presentation prompt cards

	Prompt heading	Bullet points
1	My best holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where did you go? How long for? How old were you? Describe the place you stayed Who did you go with? Tell a story about what happened there Say what made it special
2	Me and my friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name two or three friends and describe them Say what you like to do together Tell a story about something you did together
3	Around my area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell us where you live and what it is like (eg small village, busy town) Say what there is for young people to do Say what activities you take part in Say what you would like to be able to do
4	My hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe two or three things that you like to do Say why you like them Tell a story about doing each of them
5	A normal day after school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your journey home What time do you have your meal? What might you have? What do you do in the evening? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV? Computer? What do you watch or go on? Do you meet friends? What do you do together?
6	My life in ten years' time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of home will you have? Who will make up your family? What job will you do? What interests and hobbies will you have?
7	My ambitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you want to do when you are older? Say why you have these ambitions Describe the kind of life you would have if realise your ambitions
8	My favourite TV show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the show and say why you like it Describe the characters Tell us what happens in your favourite episode
9	My favourite singer/band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name and describe them Name and describe your favourite song Say what they are like Say what you like about them
10	My favourite film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the main characters

		Describe the plot Say why you like the film Describe one of your favourite scenes
11	My first day at school	How did you feel before you left home? Describe your journey (who were you with, how did you get to school?) Describe what you remember about arriving in your class Who was your first teacher? What was he or she like?
12	My favourite lesson	Which lesson? Why? Explain some of the things you've learnt in the lesson Describe a typical lesson Tell us what you are studying in that lesson at the moment
13	Personal topic	Talk about any subject that interests you

For the HL cards, prompts 1 to 5 were designed to elicit information about the pupils' lifestyles. Responses to these presentation topics would allow pupils to construct their own identities which could support information gathered through the questionnaires. For example, for the topic *A normal day after school* pupils might talk about doing homework and attending afterschool clubs, or they might talk about hanging around the streets and possibly getting involved in anti-social behaviour. This information could then be used to flesh out the responses to the *friendship group culture* index.

Prompts 6 and 7 were designed to give insights into aspiration and were included to gather supporting evidence for the *aspiration* index

Prompts 8 to 10 were more frivolous and were designed to fulfil several purposes. They were light-hearted topics which would be easy to speak about, they would engage pupils and give them a chance to combine presenting with the chance to engage in celebrity gossip – but they would also indicate the pupils interests and affiliations. They were included in response to the development and growing influence of the celebrity culture prevalent in the modern youth culture (Milner,

2005). Recent decades have seen a shift away from social and community-based identities and towards an 'intensification of individual values' (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 135) which has come about through the weakening of social class ideologies. Rampton (2010b: 234) discusses the impact on identity construction of a social shift away from community commitments towards 'life-style' influences, such as a growing interest in celebrities. This implies a loosening of the influence once exerted by tight knit communities and social groups and a greater freedom to seek out role models and subgroups that better fit with our own interests and attitudes. By asking pupils to talk about these topics, they were being given licence to show what kind of people and themes they affiliated themselves with. A pupil who listed *Celebrity Juice* (a late-night comedy show marked with laddish humour which would be considered lewd and sexist by many people) as their favourite TV show would be choosing to disclose information about the kind of person they are.

Prompts 11 and 12 were included to gather some additional qualitative information which might provide some information about attitudes to school. I was cautious in offering prompts probing attitude to school because of the risk that pupils might take an opportunity to air a grievance, for example by criticising a teacher. The prompt *My favourite lesson* deliberately attempted to close down opportunities for negative stories about teachers or lessons by specifying that 'favourite' lessons should be discussed. The prompt about the first day at school was designed to facilitate engaging stories about a time of high excitement and was one of the prompts which was planted in order to positively manage the mood of the session.

In addition to these, the *Personal topic* (prompt 13) card offered pupils the chance to speak about anything they wanted. This was included in case any pupils had topics they felt passionate about and wanted the opportunity to speak about.

Appendix E: Rationale for LL presentation prompt cards

	Prompt heading	Bullet points
1	Smoking awareness counsellor You are a professor visiting a school to tell Year 7 pupils about smoking. Talk about:	The effect smoking has on people Lungs, breathing, smell, fitness Some stories about people who've smoked too much What Year 7 pupils should do if they're offered cigarettes
2	Alcohol awareness counsellor You are a professor visiting a school to educate pupils about alcohol. Talk about:	The effect alcohol has on people Some stories about people who've drunk too much Three different alcoholic drinks How teenagers should deal with alcohol
3	Police chief You are the new police chief giving a talk about how the police should deal with young people on the streets. Talk about:	What issues there are around young people Tell some stories about times you have met young people on the streets and what they were like How you think the police should change the way they deal with young people
4	After-school clubs organiser You are a teacher at school and have been put in charge of after-school clubs. You have been asked to speak at an assembly.	Give details of three activities Name and describe each one Say why pupils should take part in them Say where and when they will happen
5	Youth worker You are starting a new youth club in the area and are giving a presentation to local teenagers about what will be offered at your club.	List three things they could do at your club Tell them when the club will be open Talk about three trips that you will run each year
6	New head teacher You are the new head of the school addressing your first assembly.	Tell the pupils how the school will change now that you are in charge Talk about: Behaviour Dress A new reward scheme A new punishment system

		After school activities
7	<p>Careers advisor</p> <p>You are a careers advisor giving a presentation to a group of young people who are about to leave school. Talk about:</p>	<p>Three jobs pupils might want to do when they leave school, tell them what each job entails</p> <p>How to prepare for an interview: how they should dress, how they should behave</p>
8	<p>TV Producer</p> <p>You are the producer of I'm a Celebrity and are announcing who will be on the next series and why. Talk about:</p>	<p>Each celebrity; what they are like and why you picked them</p> <p>How you think they will get along, including any clashes</p> <p>What things you are going to get the celebrities to do</p>
9	<p>Mobile phone salesperson</p> <p>You are a salesperson giving a talk about a new mobile phone which claims to do everything! Talk about:</p>	<p>Social media (Facebook etc)</p> <p>Three games on the phone</p> <p>New video chat function</p> <p>Three of the best apps</p>
10	<p>Charity appeal</p> <p>You are a charity worker making an appeal for money. Talk about:</p>	<p>Name your charity and say what you raise money for</p> <p>Tell a story about someone or something you have helped</p> <p>Say how much money you want each person to give and what it will be spent on</p> <p>Say what they get in return</p>
11	<p>QVC Seller</p> <p>You are giving a presentation on the QVC channel. Pick three children's items to sell.</p>	<p>Name and describe each item</p> <p>Say how much it costs and when it will be delivered</p>
12	<p>Court reporter</p> <p>You are reporting for court about a trial. Talk about the following:</p>	<p>Describe the person on trial and say what they are charged with</p> <p>Describe the crime</p> <p>Say whether they were found guilty and, if so, what their sentence was</p>

Some of these prompts probed social attitudes, for example prompts 1 and 2 and these were included to give pupils the chance to present their opinions on these things.

Pupils could choose to talk seriously about why these things were dangerous or they could show that they felt they were acceptable. Ethnographic studies into adolescents suggest that some pupils engage in these activities and that such pupils are much more likely to be disengaged in school (eg Willis, Eckert, Sharpe and O'Donnell, Moore).

Prompt 3 was designed to explore pupils' attitudes to the police. The stance of the talk here was deliberately left open to interpretation and would be interested to see if pupils decided to focus on the problems a minority of young people bring to communities or if they would project an identity which was sympathetic to young people.

Prompts 4 and 5 probed pupils' attitudes to adult-organised activities. As discussed in 2.4.2, one trait of working-class adolescents is that they prefer to avoid adult-oriented activities and these prompts would allow pupils to give views on this. It would also be interesting to see the type of activities they would come up with: would they offer intellectual activities like chess club and reading club, would they be mainly sports based, or would they come up with some more radical ideas, such as a Grand Theft Auto Club?

Prompt 6 gave pupils to chance to talk about what changes they would make in their school if they had the chance. This prompt had the potential to generate some of the most interesting discourse which could support (or contrast with) *attitude to school* index scores. In response to this prompt pupils could make a serious presentation in which they criticised current standards of behaviour at the school or they could advocate the dismantling of school rules and the introduction of chaos. This topic

would force pupils to choose a head teacher identity which would reveal things about themselves.

Prompt 7 probed issues of aspiration. Here, it would be interesting to see which types of jobs pupils would recommend. This could signal what type of jobs were salient to them.

Two prompts, prompts 8 and 9, were more frivolous and were designed to allow pupils to talk about typical light-hearted youth culture issues; specifically, celebrities and mobile phones.

Some prompts were included which were less personal and which pupils might find easier to talk about, and these were prompts 10, 11 and 12. For these prompts, pupils were given some additional details (although they didn't have to adhere to it) such as details of the items for sale or the crime being reported on. The idea behind giving pupils bullet points on the prompt cards was so that pupils only had to speak about each bullet point for around twenty seconds.

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Department of Linguistics and English Language

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Shaun Austin and for the next three years I'll be carrying out some research at schools in the North West. I'd like to involve your child in a study into how pupils' changing attitudes affect the way they engage with classroom activities (more specifically, how they engage with classroom presentations). Details of the study are given on the 'Project information sheet'.

The time between Years 8 and 10 are particularly interesting to researchers because it is such a significant time in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Over the next few years, your child will be constructing and developing their personal identities, making and amending their friendship groups and forging the social skills that will carry them through to adulthood. These changes are likely to see fluctuations in how they engage with the school.

I plan to repeat the study each year over the next three years and hope to match changes in attitudes to levels of engagement as pupils pass through this vital and vibrant life stage.

The study is designed to be interesting and engaging for pupils (that's the plan at least!) and I hope they will learn something from it. Through their involvement, your child will have opportunities to develop their presentation skills, improve their team working skills, build their confidence and find time to reflect on their attitudes and opinions.

In return for their participation, all pupils will receive a small reward as a token of my thanks – and a couple of pupils will receive bigger prizes.

If you would like to discuss this further with me, I can be contacted at any time (details are given on the information sheet). I'm really looking forward to working with these pupils and hope I can provide an interesting experience for them.

Yours sincerely

Shaun Austin

Project information sheet – Lancaster University

Title: Social study into how attitudes affect classroom presentations

Researcher: Shaun Austin, PhD student, Lancaster University
Supervisor: Professor Paul Kerswill, Lancaster University

Details:

This research project is aimed at exploring the links between pupils' attitudes and how they make classroom presentations.

Requirements:

Pupils taking part in the study will be asked to:

1. Carry out speaking tasks:
 - a. Working in a small friendship group, looking at prompt cards and discussing the statements on them (an example might be: 'Pop Idol is better than X-Factor')
 - b. Planning and making a number of one minute presentations
2. Complete four questionnaires which ask about a wide range of things. Most of the questions are given as statements which pupils can agree or disagree with (an example might be 'I enjoy living around here'). These questions are based on previous adolescent studies and reflect a wide range of attitudes, including some nonconformist attitudes⁴²
3. Possibly take part in follow-up discussions. This will be on a voluntary basis and will be discussed and agreed with pupils at the time.

Twelve pupils are being asked to take part in the activities, which will be spread over four one hour sessions as part of the English lesson. Some information is withheld from participants until the study is completed in order to avoid them focusing on it too much (which could affect their approach to the task). At the end of the study, pupils will be fully briefed on what it was about and will have chance to ask any questions.

⁴² If you would like a copy of the questionnaires, please contact the researcher, Shaun Austin on 07590 119292, email s.austin@lancaster.ac.uk. Alternatively, contact the school for a copy or ask your child to request a copy.

Ethics:

Participation in the study is voluntary and pupils can change their mind and withdraw from the study at any time.

All information from the questionnaires will be treated as confidential and anonymous; no pupils will be asked to put their names on any questionnaires and no member of the school staff will have access to information that can link pupils to their answers.

Signed consent is required from the parents of all pupils before their information can be used in the study.

The study is designed to be enjoyable and interesting. All pupils taking part will receive a small reward in return for their help – and some will receive a bigger prize.

Contact:

Shaun Austin
PhD Student
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s.austin@lancaster.ac.uk

Professor Paul Kerswill
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LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Department of Linguistics and English Language

**CONSENT FORM – Participant’s copy
(keep for your records)**

Project title: **How attitudes affect classroom presentations**

1. I have read and understand the Information Sheet relating to this project.
2. I understand the purposes of the project and what will be required of my child. I agree to the arrangements for my child’s participation as described in the Information Sheet.
3. I understand that my child’s participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the project any time.
4. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the accompanying Information Sheet.

Pupil’s name:

Your name:

Signed of parent:

Date:

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Department of Linguistics and English Language

**CONSENT FORM – Researcher’s copy
(sign and hand in to English teacher/Researcher)**

Project title: **How attitudes affect classroom presentations**

1. I have read and understand the Information Sheet relating to this project.
2. I understand the purposes of the project and what will be required of my child. I agree to the arrangements for my child’s participation as described in the Information Sheet.
3. I understand that my child’s participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the project any time.
4. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and the accompanying Information Sheet.

Pupil’s name:

Your name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix G: Development of Excel spreadsheet

My thesis study involved amassing a corpus of approximately 225,000 with contributions from around eighty participants; identifying and quantifying approximately thirteen linguistic variables in two speech styles; and generating indices from approximately eighty statements (presented mainly in a Likert-scale format), contributing to five social index ‘pots’ across four questionnaires. The management and manipulation of this data will need to be tightly controlled if the process is to proceed in an efficient manner. In order to achieve this, I developed an Excel program with the ambition of requiring minimal input but giving total flexibility of output.

Social indices

The starting point for the spreadsheet was to compile a sheet showing the statements which could also be used to generate the questionnaires and which could then be used to quantify responses to the indices (the spreadsheet submitted electronically with this thesis).

Having listed the statements, they were tied into the different social indices as shown in figure Figure 12.1. The statements (column E) were linked to the social index pots (columns F to J) by inputting a (binary coding of) ‘1’ where the statement and index intersect. For example, the ‘1’ in cell F3 ties the statement ‘It is important to my family that I do well at school’ to the *home culture* index.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	L	M
		Questionnaire number			Statement	Home culture	Community embedded-mess	Peer group value systems	Attitude to school	Aspiration		+/-
1												
2					Statement	7	9	11	12	8		
3	1	1	1		It is important to my family that I do well at school	1						1
4	2	1	2		No-one at home takes an interest in my school work	1						-1
5	3	1	3		Someone at home takes a keen interest in my school work	1						1
6	4	1	4		Someone at home makes sure I do my homework	1						1
7	1	1	5		Someone at home encourages me to read books	1						1
8	1	2	1		I'm proud to live around here		1					1
9	2	2	2		Most of my parents' friends live near us		1					1

Figure 12.1: Excel sheet used to tie statements to social indices

However, some of the statements contribute positively to the index whilst others contribute negatively and this necessitates a column which shows the polarity of the statement (positive or negative) – column M - so that calculations would be put into the spreadsheet to reverse the statement’s contribution to the index. As an example, Table 12.1 shows the results of responses to two statements by two pupils (scores range from -5, strongly disagree, to +5, strongly agree). Here, the pro-school pupil scores the maximum agreement with the statement *I love school*, and maximum disagreement with the statement *I hate school*. And the anti-school pupil responds in the opposite manner. But the effect is that the positive and negative scores cancel each other out, resulting in both pupils generating zero in the totals in the index. To overcome this, a box is added showing the polarity of the statement – whether it is consistent with the index being measured (+1), or goes against (-1). Scores can then be multiplied by the polarity with the result shown in Table 12.2. Now that each score has been multiplied by the polarity, the pro-school pupil has an index total of +10 whilst the anti-school pupil has a total of -10.

Table 12.1: Example calculation without polarity column

	Pro-school pupil	Anti-school pupil
I love school	5	-5
I hate school	-5	5
total score	0	0

In Figure 12.1, row 4 gives an example of a negative polarity statement. The -1 in column M will result in responses to this statement contributing appropriately to the index total.

The next sheets to be developed were the questionnaires, followed by the input sheet. In order to maximise efficiency, the input sheet had to mirror the four questionnaires. In the questionnaires, the order of statements was mixed up to ensure that each questionnaire had a balanced mix of statements. This was done by allocating each statement a questionnaire number (Figure 12.1, column B), setting up four questionnaire sheets and filtering the statements appropriate to each questionnaire. This meant that each questionnaire would be produced automatically based on whether there was a ‘1’ entered in the column for the index. For

Table 12.2: Example calculation including polarity column

	+/-	Pro-school pupil	Score	Anti-school pupil	Score
I love school	1	5	5	-5	-5
I hate school	-1	-5	5	5	-5
total score			10		-10

example, the '1's in column F in Figure 12.1 meant that the statements in rows 3 to 7 would be included in the *home culture* index questionnaire. This proved invaluable when statements needed to be removed from questionnaires when they were found not to be working correctly as this could be done simply by removing the '1' and reprinting the new questionnaire.

The 'input index data' sheet then was set up to sort the statements into the same order as they appear in the questionnaires in order to minimise input time. Figure 12.2 shows

the input sheet: pupils were asked to (dis)agree with statements along a six point scale and scoring along the scale was set as -5, -3, -1, +1, +3, +5. The calculations are hidden but will be shown and discussed below.

	A	B	C	D	E	M	W	AG	AQ	BA	BK	BU	CE	CO	CY	DI	I
1																	
8						Andrew	Benny	Chris	Doc	Elma	Fredna	Gym	Hanna	India	James	Kat	
10	1	1	1	It is important to my family that I do well at school	1	5	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
11	1	1	5	Someone at home encourages me to read books	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	5	
12	1	2	1	I'm proud to live around here	1	5	3	1	5	5	1	3	3	5	3	3	
13	1	2	5	Lots of people around my area know my family	1	-3	3	3	3	3	1	-3	-1	5	3	-3	
14	1	4	1	I behave badly in class	-1	3	3	-3	3	-3	5	-1	3	-1	1	5	
15	1	4	5	Most teachers are really helpful	1	1	-1	-1	1	-5	-3	-5	3	1	-1	-5	
16	1	4	9	Some teachers inspire me to try my best	1	5	-5	1	-1	-3	-1	3	5	3	1	-5	
17	1	5	1	I have no idea what I want to do with my life	-1	-5	3	3	5	1	1	-5	3	-3	3	1	

Figure 12.2: Indices Excel input sheet

Figure 12.3 shows the hidden calculations for Andrew. Scores from each statement response are entered into the yellow boxes in column M. For the first statement (row 10), columns R to V check whether this statement contributes to their index by looking for a '1' in columns F to J. If there is no '1' in these columns, their cell is left blank.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	
1																						
2																	Possible score	35	45	55	60	40
3																	Possible score x 2	70	90	110	120	80
4																	Score + half possible score	61	63	72	70	78
5																	Score / possible score x 2	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.6	1.0
6																	Score	26	18	17	10	38
7																	Count	7	9	11	12	8
8						Home culture	Community embedded-	Peer group value systems	Attitude to school	Aspiration		Andrew	Comm Emb	Peer Group	Att to Sch	Aspiration	Home culture	Comm Embedd	Peer Group	Att to Sch	Aspiration	
10	1	1	1	It is important to my family that I do well at school	1	1	0	0	0	0		5	5	5	5	5	5					
11	1	1	5	Someone at home encourages me to read books	1	1	0	0	0	0		1	1	1	1	1	1					
12	1	2	1	I'm proud to live around here	1	0	1	0	0	0		5	5	5	5	5		5				
13	1	2	5	Lots of people around my area know my family	1	0	1	0	0	0		-3	-3	-3	-3	-3		-3				
14	1	4	1	I behave badly in class	-1	0	0	0	1	0		3	3	3	3	3					-3	

Figure 12.3: Hidden calculations in Excel spreadsheet

If there is a '1', as in column R, then the score (column M) is multiplied by the polarity (column E).

Rows 2 to 7 then summarise and consolidate each index column. Row 2 counts the entries in the data field. Row 3 multiplies this by the highest possible score, 5, to give the highest potential score for the index. But the range for this score runs both positively and negatively (in the case of row R, the highest score would be +35 and the lowest, -35). So that the range can run from 0, row 4 adds its total to itself, giving a total of 70 so that it runs from 0 to 70. Row 5 similarly shifts the range to begin at zero by adding +35 to the score. We now have two comparable figures – the possible score, 70, and the actual score, 61. The score is then show as a share of the possible score in row 7. In the case of the *home culture* index, Andrew scores 0.9 of the total (cell R5, rounded up from 0.871).

There may be more efficient ways in which to calculate these scores but, after a lot of thought, effort and testing, the 'input social index' sheet was found to generate accurate outputs based on straightforward, minimum input for the five social indices. For this data to be compatible with the SPSS input requirements, it was thrown onto a summary sheet shown in Figure 12.4.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2		Home culture	Community emt	Peer group vall	Attitude to scho	Aspiration
3	Andrew	0.871	0.700	0.655	0.583	0.975
4	Benny	0.614	0.611	0.436	0.383	0.575
5	Chris	0.800	0.600	0.436	0.467	0.575
6	Dee	0.500	0.733	0.691	0.383	0.400
7	Elma	0.971	0.689	0.327	0.433	0.713
8	Fredna	0.843	0.500	0.618	0.433	0.700
9	Gym	0.657	0.267	0.400	0.317	0.450
10	Hanna	0.871	0.467	0.673	0.733	0.600
11	India	0.514	0.933	0.382	0.550	0.575
12	James	0.857	0.533	0.655	0.650	0.725
13	Kat	0.829	0.533	0.700	0.483	0.600
14	Lushuma	0.743	0.711	0.727	0.700	0.625
15	Marcus	0.229	0.978	0.745	0.533	0.525

Figure 12.4: SPSS compatible spreadsheet: social variables

Linguistic variables

The capture of linguistic variables also presented challenges, both in terms of capturing the data and then making it compatible with SPSS. Firstly, the linguistic variables come in two types: RFs, shares of the total; and NFs tokens per 1,000 words (discussed in 5.5.3). An example of an RF would be the realisation or dropping of aitch. This can be calculated by marking every instance of the use of /h/ with 1 or 0, depending on if the variable was realised (1) or dropped (0). The total number of tokens can then be identified (h^1+h^0) and h^1 s can be shown as a share of this total. SPSS requires this data to be shown as a decimal rather than a percentage figure. For example, if there are 100 tokens of /h/, 75 of them are realised and 25 are not, this would be shown as 0.75.

An example of a NF would be *like*-DM. Here, there the speaker doesn't choose between two variants of a variable, but chooses whether to use the variable or not. This type of variable use can be compared between speakers when it is shown as a share of the speaker's word count. Typically, this would be shown out of 1,000 words through the calculation $\frac{n}{\text{word count}} \times 1000$. As an example, if a speaker utters 500 words and uses *like*-DM three times, the calculation would be as follows:

$$3 \text{ (tokens)} \div 500 \text{ (words)} \times 1,000 \text{ (standardising figure)} = 6 \text{ tokens per 1,000 words.}$$

When this calculation is carried out for all speakers, individual differences in word counts are ironed out and the outputs are comparable.

Again, a 'minimal input' sheet was set up to capture the data, which could then be manipulated to produce summaries which could be easily manipulated and which would be compatible with SPSS. The gathering of this data was very labour intensive (discussed in 5.5). Having identified the variables to be explored, they were marked in the corpus (e.g. *like*-DM was identified by a 1 at the end of *like*, to give *like1*). This could then be searched and counted using the find function in word. This resulted in a spreadsheet showing how many variants of each variable were used by each pupil across the three speech elicitation types, as shown in Figure 12.5. This shows the data for several pupil (row 1, columns F to M) from their High Load presentations (cell

	A	B	C	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Return to Main Menu			Albert Semi	Alice	Andrew	Barry	Benny	Bobby	Bradley	Bradley Set	Clara
39	High Load		117169	924	2197	1260	1218	1027	1039	1025	2266	14
40	Local											
41	open class h-realised	1577		12	40	5	11		23	7	7	
42	h-dropped	315		2	1	0	3		0	3	13	
43	closed class h-realised	622		1	19	5	7	1	6	0	4	
44	h-dropped	998		13	11	0	12	5	0	20	27	
45	the	2071		16	25	18	35	16	31	31	56	2
46	dar	53		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
47	was	1012			5	11	10	10	16	9	11	1
48	were-for-was	122			0	1	0	2	0	0	0	
49	mna	46			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
50												
51	Formal											
52	formal1	1318		4	45	7	17	7	17	15	13	
53	formal0	1036		14	36	2	3	1	28	4	25	
54	informal	306		4	5	3	4	2	1	2	9	
55	ge	264		2	5	2	2	0	1	1	0	
56	impolite	46		0	0	3	0	2	0	1	11	
57	taboo	32		4	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	
58												
59	Youth features											
60	th-realised	1108		5	37		11		7	3	10	
61	th-fronted	648		16	2		0		2	3	39	
62	word medial t-realised	434		0	17	3	5	4	13	0	13	
63	t-voiced	51		0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	
64	1074 t-glottalised	589		8	8	1	5	2	4	3	12	1
65	word final t-realised	50		0	2				0	1	0	
66	t-voiced	57		0	0				0	1	1	
67	5861 final t-glottalised	479		2	8				6	4	11	
68	well/proper	71		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
69	like-DM	902		17	1	13	5	2	2	6	5	2

Figure 12.5: Linguistic data input sheet

A39). So Alice (cell G1) had 41 tokens of open-class h; she realised 40 of them and dropped 1 (cells G41 and G42).

From this input sheet, a sheet was designed which would turn the raw data into SPSS compatible data. Figure 12.6 shows the SPSS compatible sheet. This summary sheet allows the data from pupils, groups or variables to be manipulated in any number of ways in order to find patterns.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1						Social Indices				Local				Formal		Urban Youth										
2		Gender	School	Year	Home culture	Community emt	Peer group valk	Attitude to scho	Aspiration		h-realised		was		formal1		th-realised		t-realised		like-dm					
3											HL	LL	HL	LL	HL	LL	HL	LL	HL	LL	HL	LL	HL	LL		
4	Abe	Male	PH	9	0.90	0.41	0.47	0.57	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.94	1.00	0.80	1.00	0.60	1.00	8.25	6.78					
5	Andrew	Male	PH	9	0.87	0.70	0.65	0.58	0.98	1.00	0.75	0.92	1.00	1.00	0.73	1.00	1.00	0.67	1.00	12.71	12.53					
6	Barry	Male	PH	9	0.64	0.66	0.73	0.57	0.53	0.45	0.83	1.00	0.91	0.74	0.15	0.30	0.50	0.50	0.35	4.63	2.30					
7	Benny	Male	PH	9	0.61	0.61	0.44	0.38	0.58	1.00	0.93	0.92	1.00	0.47	0.89	0.50	1.00	0.57	0.50	8.70	0.89					
8	Chris	Male	PH	9	0.80	0.60	0.44	0.47	0.58	0.71	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.23	0.67	0.50	0.83	0.08	0.67	19.67	2.90					
9	Christopher	Male	VWH	9	0.60	0.44	0.65	0.60	0.50	0.23	0.76	0.67	1.00	0.22	0.43	0.38	0.23	0.00	0.27	1.43	0.00					
10	Declan	Male	VWH	9	0.57	0.80	0.69	0.60	0.65	0.57	0.87	0.89	1.00	0.38	0.63	0.23	0.25	0.08	0.62	3.70	1.43					
11	Doreen	Female	PH	9	0.76	0.98	0.89	0.72	0.75	1.00	1.00	0.89	1.00	0.67	0.91	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.10	1.10					
12	Eileen	Female	PH	9	0.77	0.47	0.95	0.92	0.95	1.00	1.00	0.83	1.00	0.67	0.78	0.63	0.60	0.67	0.71	2.16	1.70					
13	Eleanor	Female	VWH	9	0.63	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.60	0.67	0.96	1.00	1.00	0.58	0.73	0.47	0.93	0.00	0.30	12.18	5.22					
14	Elma	Female	PH	9	0.97	0.69	0.33	0.43	0.71	0.91	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.78	0.67	0.50	0.25	0.20	0.38	23.45	20.81					
15	Faye	Female	VWH	9	0.53	0.93	0.60	0.48	0.53	1.00	0.90	1.00	1.00	0.36	0.76	0.75	0.90	0.18	0.75	22.36	11.21					

Figure 12.6: SPSS Compatible Spreadsheet: all variables

SPSS

In order to test the statistical significance of the results, two different methods were used. The first statistical significance test needed to establish whether the differences between HLs and LLs had occurred by chance or because of the presentation conditions. This type of dataset is a related sample which involves comparing data gathering in two conditions. T-tests are specifically designed for this environment and are particularly useful when used to compare datasets collected in two conditions from a single sample of participants, as is the case with my data. Because I cannot assume that the dataset is normally distributed, a non-parametric significance test would be most appropriate. One of the most common is the Wilcoxon matched pair signed ranks test and this is available through software packages such as SPSS. This method identifies the differences between the T_1 and T_2 , ranks each participant according to the difference (initially ignoring the positive or negative sign), reassigns the positive and negative signs, totals the positively and negatively signed numbers, identifies the smaller of the two numbers and checks this against Wilcoxon significance table (Howitt and Cramer, 2011: 195-6). This appeared to be the most appropriate test for my data.

In order to assess the statistical significance of the correlations between social indices and linguistic variables, a different tool was required. Single pairs of correlations are most commonly displayed as scattergrams (Howitt and Cramer, 2011: 69) which show one set of data along the y axis and another set along the x axis. The fact that the plots fall in a diagonal line in this example shows that there appears to be a link between the two sets of data. A typical example would be the time taken on a journey (y axis) and the speed travelled at (x axis). Calculations can be used to identify a 'regression line' through these plots which shows the 'best fitting straight line' (Howitt and Cramer, 2011: 86) through the grid. This line can then be used to measure how closely the data adheres to it (but also to facilitate predictions for a point on one axis based on the position of a point on the other axis). For statistical analysis purposes, the amount of deviation in the scatter-points away from the regression line can be quantified as the 'correlation coefficient' (Howitt and Cramer, 2011: 86) and this calculation is used to measure SS.

Although such bivariate correlations offer valuable contributions to the analysis of data, they are, by definition, focused on only two variables. In many situations more than one variable is likely to influence the results of another variable and there are many possible permutations of correlations between the social indices and the linguistic variables. Multivariate analysis techniques have been designed to do this. Through these methods, scatterplots for each social index against each linguistic variable are effectively constructed simultaneously and are presented together on a single spreadsheet. This is done by distilling correlation statistics down to the 'correlation coefficient' so that a single grid can be generated which shows the figure for all combinations of binary correlations at the same time.

SS software packages offer several multivariate correlation options depending on the nature of the data. One of the most common tools for non-parametric multivariate correlation analysis is Spearman's ranked correlation coefficient.

Here, the 'Spearman Correlation' row shows the correlation coefficient figure (showing how closely the points on the scattergram fit the best-fitting straight line). The minus figure indicates that the correlation is a negative one (meaning that as the data on one

axis rises, the data on the other falls). The ‘Sig (2-tailed)’ row shows the SS figure. So in the first data entry (comparing ‘th’ with ‘Attitude to school’), the significance is shown as 0.952 (out of a possible 1.000), meaning that there is a huge likelihood that this correlation occurred by chance. The ‘N’ row shows the number of samples contributing the data to the calculation, in this case there was only eight. By setting out the data in this manner, it is possible to ‘eyeball’ all the correlations and identify any potentially interesting data in a single table.

Having gathered the data into an SPSS compatible format, the running of the tests was easily achieved by following the step-by-step instructions given in Bryman & Cramer (2011).

Table 12.3 shows the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. This shows that the differences between high and low load presentations for *h-*, *th-* and */t/-*realisation, and *like-DM* are all statistically significant. *Were-for-was* was just outside the $p < 0.05$ cut off while the formal variables had a 46% likelihood that they could have occurred by chance, which is a long way outside the SS range.

Table 12.3: Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test

	hLL - hHL	wasLL - wasHL	formalLL - formalHL	thLL - thHL	tLL - tHL	likeLL - likeHL
Z	-2.334a	-1.762a	-0.737a	-2.219a	-3.983a	-2.603b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.020	0.078	0.461	0.027	0.000	0.009

a. Based on negative ranks.

b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

This data now offers pointers for further exploration. For example, as *like-DM* has an extremely high SS, the environments in which it occurs could be investigated, as could the type of presentations in which it is more prevalent (e.g. does its use increase when presentations are of a more personal nature?).

Table 12.4 shows the Spearman’s correlation test results which, with a couple of exceptions, do not show many instances of SS between the social indices and the linguistic variables below the $p < 0.05$ point – although there are a small number. High scores on the *aspiration* index correlates very tightly with high use of formal variants and */t/-*realisation (rather than */t/-*glottalling). In exploring this further, I would look at

individual pupils for further evidence in their QUAL responses. I would also look at pupils where responses did not conform to this SS margin to see if there are any explanations or exceptions to be found.

Table 12.4: Spearmans Rank Order Correlation Coefficient

		Correlations					
		h	w as	formal	like	th	t
HomeCult	Correlation Coefficient	.173	.214	.425	0.445*	.292	.253
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.338	.294	.030	.023	.147	.212
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Community	Correlation Coefficient	.169	-.132	-.098	.116	.088	.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.408	.521	.634	.572	.670	.437
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Peer	Correlation Coefficient	.226	-.206	-.038	.061	.094	.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.267	.312	.856	.768	.856	.893
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.175	-.255	.171	-.230	.024	.176
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.394	.208	.402	.909	.907	.390
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Aspiration	Correlation Coefficient	.236	-.206	.563**	.112	.222	.661**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.247	.313	.003	.585	.275	.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26

Table 12.4 shows the Spearman's correlation test results. With a couple of exceptions, do not show many instances of SS between the social indices and the linguistic variables below the $p < 0.05$ point – although there are a small number. High scores on the *aspiration* index correlates very tightly with high use of formal variants and /t/-realisation (rather than /t/-glottalling). In exploring this further, I would look at individual pupils for additional evidence in their qualitative responses. I would also look at pupils where responses did not conform to this SS margin to see if there are any explanations or exceptions to be found.

The failure to identify tighter correlations could be a failure of the methodology (e.g. the questionnaire design) or it could suggest that the correlations do not exist as tightly as expected.

These SS outputs from offer several areas for further research and deeper analysis. From this point forward, analysis would be tailored to the situation and would not follow a prescribed method, as the pursuit of SS figures necessarily does.

Appendix H: Cleaning the data

Prior to carrying out quantitative analysis the data had to be prepared and I used several techniques to do this in three main areas:

- The consistency of pupils' responses to the questionnaires
- The effectiveness of each statement (measured by their ability to tease pupils apart in the direction expected)
- Extreme results in the speech variables which might skew the data

Responses to the questionnaires would need to be carefully assessed from two angles: to see if participants were consistent in their answers and to see if the statements were teasing people apart as expected. To test these, I set up calculation spreadsheet which would look at the consistency of pupils' answers and to look at the standard deviation of the responses.

Four statements from each questionnaire were duplicated and offered in questionnaires presented on different weeks and responses to the same statement presented on different weeks were lined up and differences calculated. This resulted in scores of between 0 (same score given on both occasions) and 10 (-5 given on one occasion, +5 given on the other) out of a possible 10. This figure was deducted from the possible total and shown as a percentage. For example, someone scoring +3 on the first occasion and +5 on the second for the same statement would accrue 2 points out of a possible 10. By deducting the 2 from the 10, giving 8 out of a possible 10, and showing the result as a percentage, these responses would be deemed 80% consistent. Scores for all the pairs of statements were combined to give a total consistency score for each pupil, shown in Table 12.5.

Table 12.5: Consistency of responses to questionnaire statements

James	95%	Bradley Sen	89%	Costineto Ser	85%	India	77%
Lushuma	95%	Fredna	88%	Daniel Sen	85%	Abe	77%
Olivia	95%	Penelope	88%	Harriet Sen	85%	Albert Sen	77%
Robbie	95%	Humphrey	88%	Steven	85%	Gina Sen	77%
Doc	95%	Tilly M	88%	Christopher	83%	Keira	75%
Alice	95%	Eleanor	86%	Vanessa	83%	Vince	75%
Nora	94%	Eileen	86%	Rosoin	83%	Nigella	74%
Phillipa	94%	Kiki	86%	Benny	82%	Dee	72%
Colin	92%	Oh	86%	Coleen	82%	Orinal	72%
Minnie	92%	Freya Sen	86%	Faye	80%	Jim	71%
Chris	91%	Hanna	85%	Lauren	80%	Patrick	71%
Gilly	91%	Natalie	85%	Barry	80%	Isabella Sen	71%
Indiana	91%	Quality	85%	Bobby	80%	Soloman	69%
Doreen	91%	Declan	85%	Eugene	80%	Roger	68%
Evan Sen	91%	Francesca	85%	Megan	80%	Kat	58%
Olive	91%	Rose	85%	Elma	78%	Taloola	58%
Victor	91%	Wendy	85%	Marcus	78%	Sunny	57%
Josie	89%	Pepper	85%	Mick	78%	Wilson	57%
Pancake	89%	Fred	85%	Andrew	77%	Sedrick	54%

Given that these pairs involved the same statement being presented in different weeks, the scores should be the same – but this wasn't the case. Whilst most pupils achieved a high score on the consistency indicator, there were also some very low scores which need to be assessed. A score of 80% would mean that a pupil had, on average across all the pairs of statements, a difference of one mark on the scales offered to them. This might mean that they responded as 'strongly agree' on one occasion and 'agree' on the next, or 'weakly agree' on one occasion and 'weakly disagree' on the next. A

wide range of factors can influence responses, including variables such as mood, I felt that an average consistency of 80% would be acceptable. Thirteen pupils were below this mark, which is a worryingly high number. By looking at each pupil's scoring, I could see that there were differences in these thirteen. For example, Marcus' average of 78%

Table 12.6: Number of occasions where pupils scored over 5 on consistency check

Elma	78%	2	Orinal	72%	3
Marcus	78%	0	Jim	71%	2
Andrew	77%	2	Patrick	71%	3
Mick	78%	1	Isabella Sen	71%	3
India	77%	1	Soloman	69%	1
Abe	77%	2	Roger	68%	5
Albert Sen	77%	1	Kat	58%	5
Gina Sen	77%	1	Taloola	58%	6
Keira	75%	1	Sunny	57%	5
Vince	75%	1	Wilson	57%	4
Nigella	74%	2	Sedrick	54%	7
Dee	72%	2			

came about because he frequently had a small difference between responses but there was only one occasion where his responses differed across the agree/disagree line. This means that although the strength of his agreements with the statements were varying, the direction of his agreements wasn't. At the other end of the spectrum, Taloola had a high level of agreement with her statements but had three occasions where she strongly agreed on one occasion and strongly disagreed on another (which accrued 10 points each) as well as strongly disagreeing on one occasion and agreeing on another (which accrued 8 points).

In response to these anomalies, I set up a calculation to identify where pupils had given responses resulting in scores of more than 5. This would mean that the responses crossed the agree/disagree line and, furthermore, that on at least one occasion the pupil recorded a strong response (strongly agreed or strongly disagreed). Table 12.6 shows the pupils who scored below 80% on the consistency check and also shows the number of times that they had a difference of over 5 between their two responses to the same statement. This shows that, for most of the pupils, the low score on the consistency check has come about due to a high number of small inconsistencies. But for some pupils, there were several occasions where their responses differed markedly. The most serious of these is Sedrick whose responses differed by over 5 points on seven occasions. This means that his responses to the thirteen statements were wildly erratic and so it would be problematic to use his questionnaire data in the study.

This raised the problem about where to draw the line: how many times should a pupil be able to respond erratically before their data is withdrawn from the study? I only checked the consistency of the duplicated statements and so I decided that any more than two significantly inconsistent scores should result in a pupil being considered too erratic to go into the study. As a consequence, nine pupils had their data removed from the study: Orinal, Patrick, Isabella Senior, Roger, Kat, Taloola, Sunny, Wilson and Sedrick. Table 12.7 shows the impact of these omissions on the group averages, revealing that for groups other than Mill Town High, the changes are minimal. But in Mill Town High the results for both boys and girls have shifted markedly.

Table 12.7: Impact of omissions of erratic pupils from group data

	Gender	Home Culture	Comm embed	Friendship group	Att to school	Aspiration
Penn High – Low set	F	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
Penn High – Low set	M	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.01	0.02
Mill Town High	F	0.00	0.03	0.01	-0.06	-0.05
Mill Town High	M	0.04	-0.04	0.02	0.01	-0.05
Valley Wide High	F	0.00	0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.01

It is difficult to understand why these pupils gave such inconsistent responses. It could be that they have a lower cognitive ability to rationalise the statements and so rationalise them differently on different occasions; that they were not motivated to take the study seriously enough to give honest, considered answers; or that they gave false answers as acts of subversion. The first explanation is unlikely because these pupils were drawn from the same classrooms as those who gave consistent answers and all three schools have a structure of ‘setting’ whereby pupils of similar abilities are grouped together classes. The problem with examining the second and third explanations is that I would need to refer to the pupils’ responses in order to say whether they scored highly on the *attitude to school* index and, as shown, these were erratic. But I was able to look for corroborating evidence elsewhere in the study, such as the general behaviour of the pupils, their approach to the tasks and the content of their presentations. These indicators generally pointed to possible reasons for the erratic responses and are discussed in the results chapters.

One of the striking features of this list is the high number of pupils from Mill Town High, consisting of four out of the six boys, Patrick, Roger, Wilson and Sedrick, and two of the girls, the twins, Taloola and Sunny. The other two Mill Town boys, Vince and Solomon, were also among the group averaging less than 80% on the consistency check stats. This was a great worry because it means that only two boys and four girls contribute to the Mill Town High statistics. Evidence from their presentations shows that they were oriented towards each other rather than towards the task (more so than other groups), suggesting that their responses were acts of subversion. The school profile for this group had similarities to Shadow High in that it was from a very dense, multiplex social networks, which suggests that it can be difficult to accurately tap into these networks using the type of methodology employed here. The twins, Taloola and

Sunny, appeared to be investing in the study and seemed eager to please during the activities although their moods and emotions were, at times, volatile: they had several arguments leading to one or the other withdrawing from various speech elicitation tasks. It is possible that this volatility could explain some of their inconsistencies.

Kat was one pupil who I wasn't surprised to see had more than three instances of very inconsistent responses. Although she contributed very well to the speech elicitation tasks, she was part of a group of three (including Hanna and India) who were very difficult to manage and who threatened to withdraw several times. Like Sunny and Taloola, these three had several arguments during the course of the study and during the speech elicitation, Kat spoke significantly more than her two friends. Kat's speech was also punctuated on some occasions by expressions of boredom, such as:

- *I'm really tired · dint get to bed till quarter . to twelve last night*
- *fucking hell . I can't be arsed · to be quite honest*
- *this is boring*

The three of them were part of a disaffected group of pupils who I was keen to draw into the study but Kat's responses to the questionnaire shows the associated risks.

After looking at the pupils, I looked at the statements and tried to assess how successful they were in teasing pupils apart in the directions expected. The standard deviation was calculated for the response to each statement and this ranged from 3.92 to 2.04. Table 12.8 shows the lowest ranking fifteen of these, with average scores also shown. This shows that the scores given in response to the lowest ranking statement *Being kind to people* were the most tightly clustered and that the mean average of the scores was 3.10.. This statement was presented under the heading *How important are these things to you and your friends?* It wasn't included to contribute to an index but was designed to contrast with the statements inspired by Cheshire's gang study which tended to be more antisocial in nature. A look across responses shows that almost all speakers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (which is, of course, reflected in the SD and mean averages).

The next two lowest ranking statements were *It is important to my family that I do well at school* and *Someone at home takes a keen interest in my school work* which were both part of the *home culture* index. This index was already the smallest, being made up of only seven statements and the fact that two of these were failing to tease pupils apart was a cause of concern. I was surprised that the second statement was unsuccessful rather than its negative counterpart, *No-one at home takes an interest in my school work* because these negative statements were found to be problematic (this negative statement was left in partly because of the small number of statements contributing to the index). The low SD and high mean averages, 3.52 and 3.76 respectively, showed that a very large percentage of pupils agreed or strongly agreed with the

Table 12.8: Lowest 15 responses to statements by Standard Deviation (average response scores also shown)

Statement	SD	Average
Smoking with friends	2.77	-3.48
My friends behave badly at school	2.76	-0.90
School prepares you for your working life	2.74	2.57
My friends try to do well at school	2.74	1.48
My parents know a lot of people near us	2.73	1.95
Trying hard at in class	2.71	2.55
Being well mannered	2.66	2.31
Being funny	2.53	1.43
Being respectful to older people	2.52	1.93
Did your parents grow up around where you live now	2.38	-1.00
I have goals in life that I want to achieve	2.28	3.90
I need to do well at school if I'm going to achieve my ambitions	2.16	3.43
Someone at home takes a keen interest in my school work	2.12	3.52
It is important to my family that I do well at school	2.11	3.76
Being kind to people	2.04	3.10

statements. The consequence for the index would be to weaken the differences across the board and with such a small number of statements contributing to the index in the first place, this could have a big detrimental effect. On the other hand, the small number of pupils disagreeing with these statements says something of potential importance about the identities they are constructing and this needs to be taken into account. I decided to remove these statements from the *home culture* index calculations but to deal with the small number of pupils who deviated away from the majority during the qualitative analysis.

The next two statements, *I have goals in life that I want to achieve* and *I need to do well at school if I'm going to achieve my ambitions*, were both from the *aspiration* index, again one of the smallest clusters with only eight statements. Once again, the high mean averages show that the majority of pupils strongly agreed with them and for this reason they were removed from the cluster index with the intention of discussing any interesting deviations from the majority during qualitative analysis.

Analysis of the next statement, *Did your parents grow up around where you live now?* shows that it was only caught up at the bottom end of the ranking because of peculiarities around its calculation. There were only three possible responses to this statement, *no*, *only one parent did* and *yes*. I scored the first as -3, the second as 0 and the third as +3. This meant that the responses were more compressed than other responses, leading to the low SD and high mean average and so the statement was left in the index.

The next few statements were made up of several values presented as part of the Cheshire-influenced method discussed above but only one of them contributed to the index, *Trying hard in class*. The other statements at the bottom of the ranking were drawn from the *attitude to school* and *friendship group culture* indices which had eleven and twelve statements in them respectively. When I removed these statements from the indices and looked at the impact it made on the rankings for the indices, it was minimal and, for this reason, the statements were left in.

Having made changes in response to pupil consistency and statement response, I critiqued the corpus. The first decision I took was to exclude instances of crossing from the calculations made about the numbers of variables used. This was an issue I was slow to see during the recordings. Although most pupils only crossed for short bursts, there were a few speakers who consistently adopted different accents and dialects for whole one-minute presentations. Initially, I found this interesting (especially since this usually violated the instruction to speak SE) but on marking the variables, I realised it was a problem. In the later stages of data gathering, I asked pupils not to adopt 'strange and alien accents and dialects' although I didn't give any reasons (because I didn't want to alert pupils to my interest in these matters).

As well as omitting ‘crossed’ speech, I looked through the corpus for outliers. These are normally speakers who exhibit speech features markedly different from other speakers in the same group and they have been found to mask patterns which are evident once their data has been removed. The most famous example might be that of Nathan B (Britain, 2003: 191, Labov, 2006: 157) whose use of the /θ/ variable diverged so significantly from that of other people in the same social stratification that it skewed the data. When it was removed, more regular patterns were evident. There is an obvious risk when omitting participants from quantitative analysis that a researcher could get into the habit of throwing out data that doesn’t match the expected results, claiming that they were outliers. My instinct was to be extremely sparing in classing any data as outliers.

To look for possible outliers, I broke participants into groups based on gender, school and, in the case of Pennine High, set (for Mill Town High and Valley Wide High all pupils were drawn from low set classes but from Pennine High, they were a mix of mid and high set classes). I set up a spreadsheet to calculate the difference between the individual and the group average and then to calculate the size of the difference. The spreadsheet was set to throw up any difference where the result for a pupil was over five times bigger or smaller than the average of their group. There were 53 instances where this was the case. (Had I been able to gather more speech from fewer pupils, as originally envisaged, I expect that this number would have been much lower.) All of the grammatical variables (with the exception of GEs) were found to involve very small numbers and so these were not

withdrawn from the study. Of the remaining variables, eleven were identified where the over- or under-use of a variable by a single pupil was skewing the data and these are shown in Table 12.9. In these instances, the data were removed from the data for the purposes of quantitative analysis.

Table 12.9: Variable ‘outliers’

	closed class h- realised	Informal	ge	th-realised		word medial t- realised	word final t- realised
				HL	LL		
	HL 3	LL 2	HL 1	HL 1	LL 1	HL 2	LL 1
Gilly	1	6.52					
Steven	1		5.26				
Victor	2					5.39	12.22
Jim	2	5.02				8.54	
Lushuma	1			5.04			
Pepper	1				5.78		
Wilson	1	5.39					
Gina Senior	1	5.84					
Harriet Senior	1	6.23					

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